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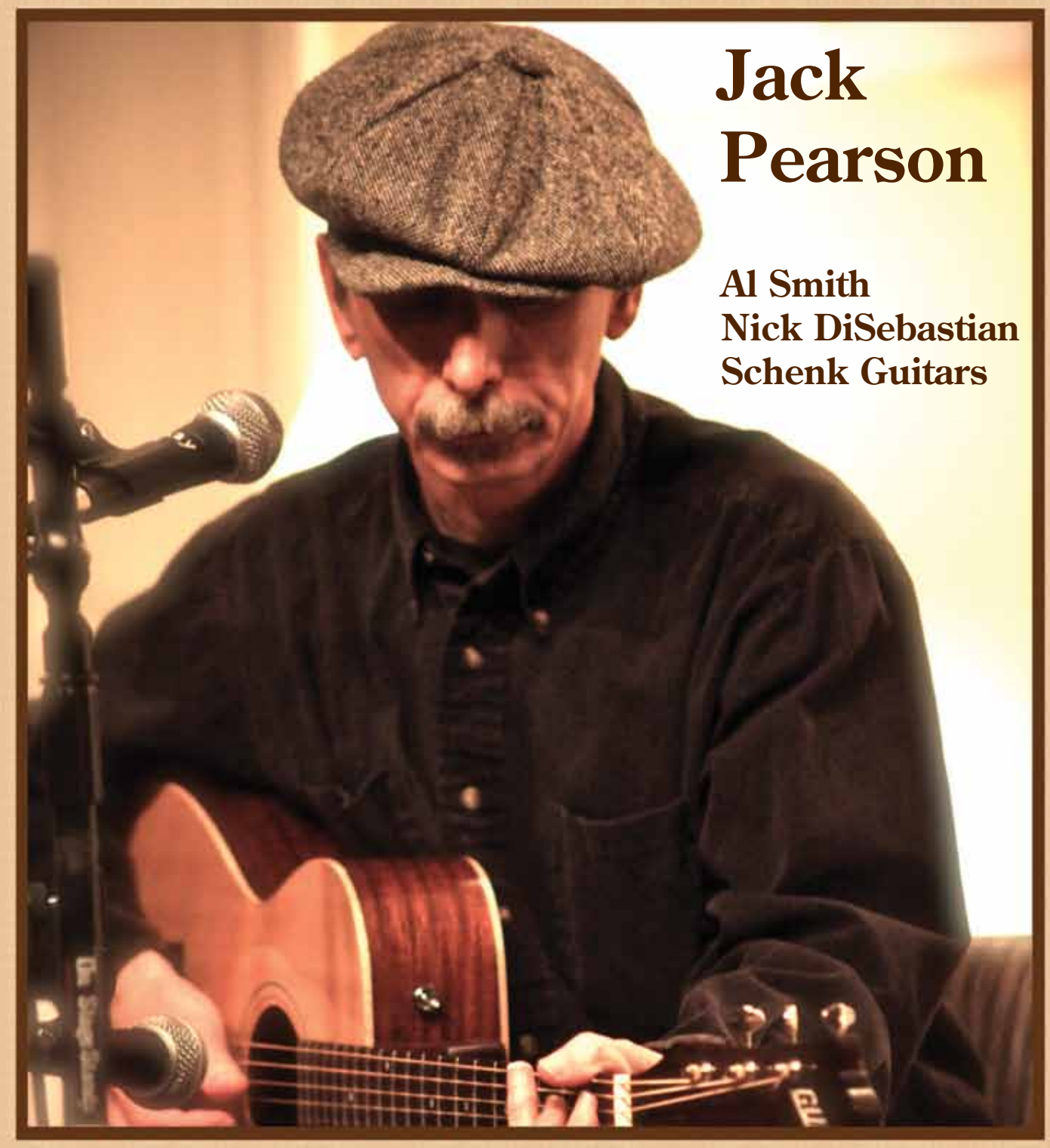
Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Volume 16, Number 2 January/February 2012



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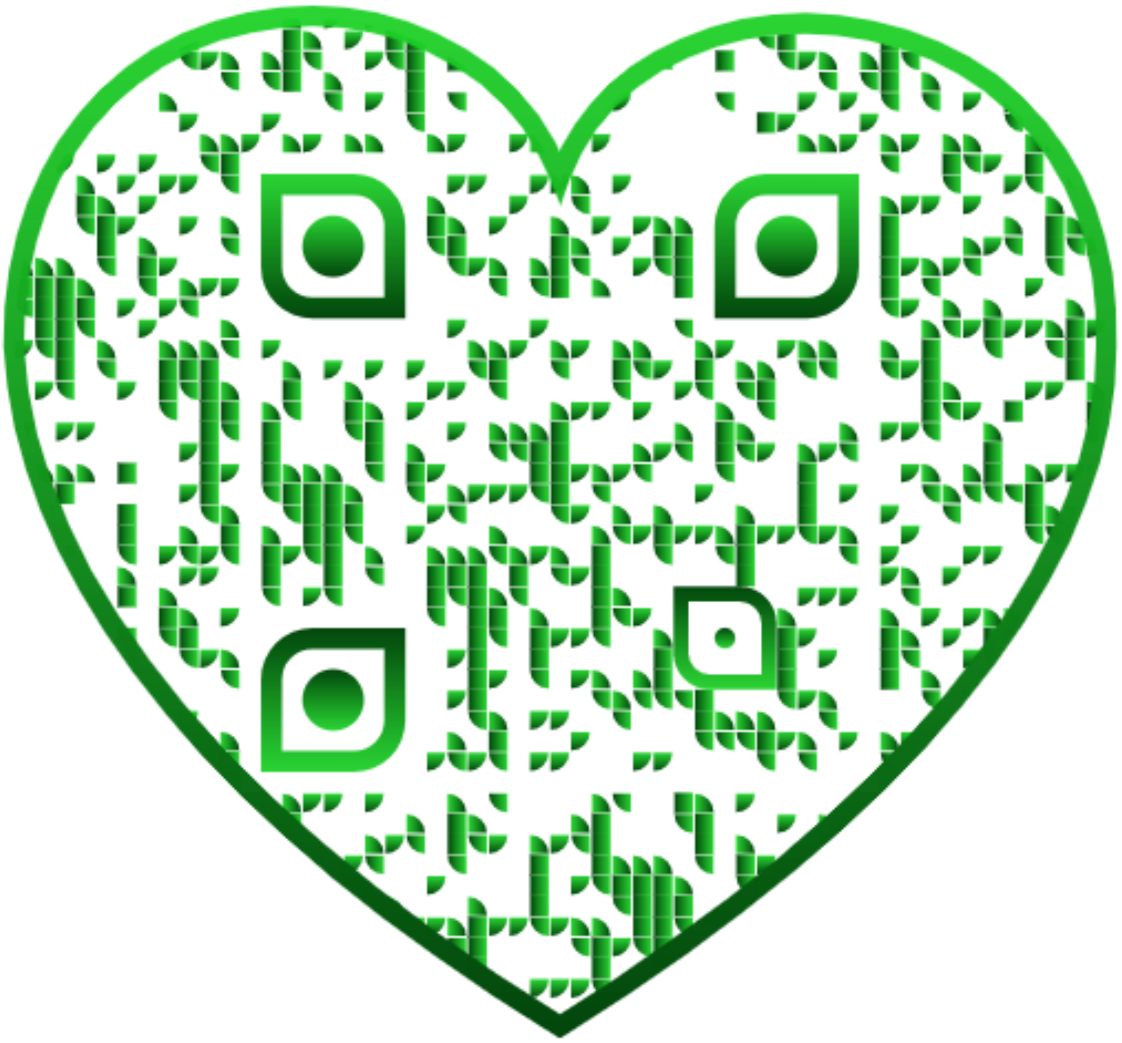

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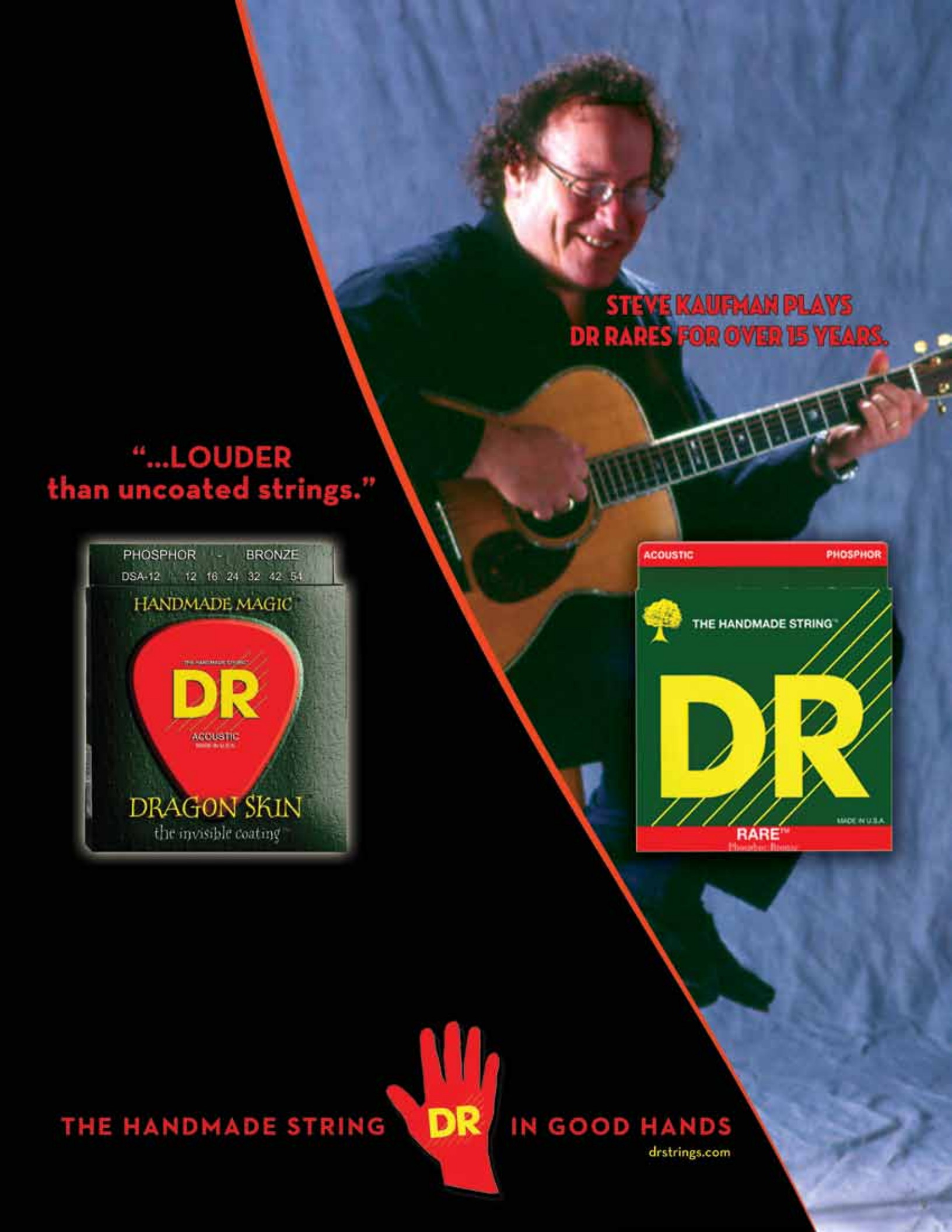
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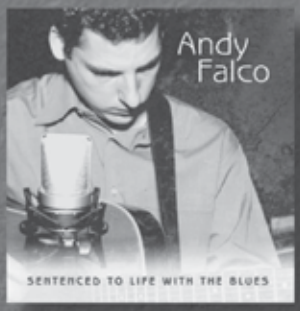

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Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Volume 16, Number 2

January/February 2012
Published bi-monthly by:
High View Publications
P.O. Box 2160
Pulaski, VA 24301

Phone: (540) 980-0338
Fax: (540) 980-0557
Orders: (800) 413-8296
E-mail: highview@flatpick.com
Web Site: http://www.flatpick.com
ISSN: 1089-9855

Dan Miller - Publisher and Editor
Connie Miller - Administration
Jackie Morris - Administration
Contributing Editors:
Dave McCarty
Chris Thiessen

Subscription Rate ($US):
US $30.00 ($60.00 with CD)
Canada/Mexico $40.00
Other Foreign $43.00

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In the "Pioneers" issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* Dan Miller laid out a flatpicking learning method that followed the chronological development of the style. This step-by-step method started with a solid foundation in the rhythm guitar styles of flatpicking's early pioneers—a style that includes a liberal use of bass runs and rhythm fill licks, combined with rhythmic strums. Volume 1 of the Eight Volume *Flatpicking Essentials* series teaches this rhythm style and prepares you for each future volume. If you want to learn how to add interesting bass runs and fill licks to your rhythm playing, check out this 96-page book with accompanying CD. This book and CD are available in spiral bound hardcopy form, on CD-Rom, or as a digital download.

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Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 6 is divided into two main sections. The first section is Part II of our study of improvisation. Volume 5 introduced readers to a step-by-step free-form improv study method that we continue here in Volume 6.

The second section of this book is focused on advanced flatpicking technique. We approached this topic by first having Tim May record "advanced level" improvisations for nineteen different flatpicking tunes. Tim selected the tunes and went into the studio with a list of techniques, like the use of triplets, natural and false harmonics, note bending, quoting, alternate tuning, syncopation, twin guitar, minor key tunes, hybrid picking, advanced crosspicking, string skipping, etc. There are a ton of absolutely awesome flatpicking arrangements by Tim May in this book, with explanations of each technique.

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Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 7 is a 170 page book, with 67 audio tracks, that will show you how to add texture, variety, and movement to your rhythm accompaniment in the context of playing bluegrass, fiddle tune music, folk music, acoustic rock, Western swing, big band swing, and jazz. The best part of this book is that it doesn't just present you with arrangements to memorize. It teaches you how you can create and execute your own accompaniment arrangements in a variety of musical styles. Don't rely on the arrangements of others, learn a straight-forward and gradual approach to designing your own rhythm accompaniment.

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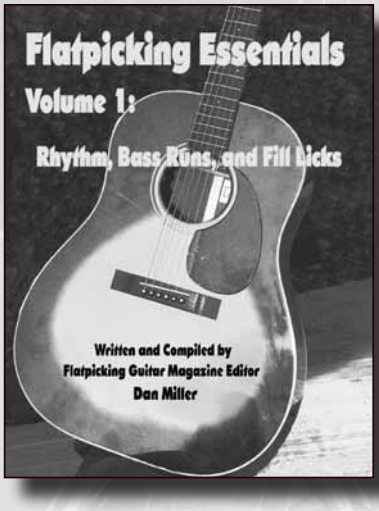

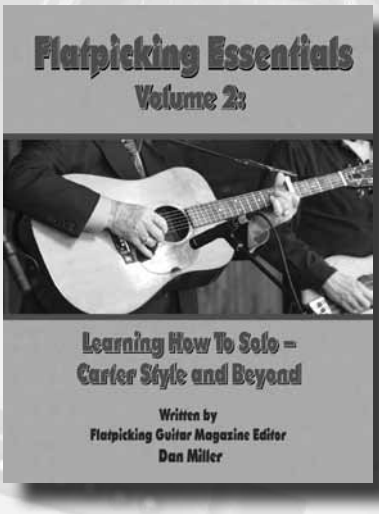

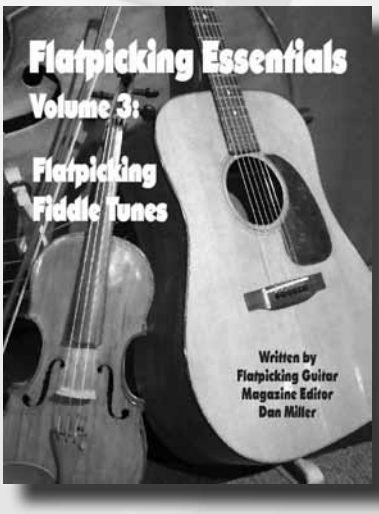

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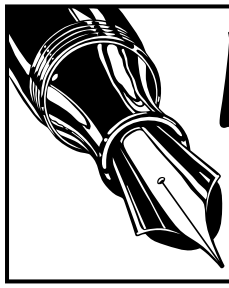

EDITOR'S PAGE

Flatpicking Workshops & Festivals

Tim May and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting many of you out on the road in 2011 at our flatpicking guitar workshops. We taught 60 different workshops last year in various locations all over the country and we would like to thank each of our hosts and all of the flatpickers who attended.

In 2012 we will be back on the road again. Currently we have workshops scheduled in January in southern California and Texas. We will also be teaching at several camps and festivals this year. For information about our workshop schedule, please visit: http://www.flatpick.com/workshops.

If you would like to host a workshop in your town, please contact me via email at dan@flatpick.com.

During 2011 I also set up the *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* booth at 20 different music festivals. I want to say "Thanks!" to all of you who stopped by the booth to say hello. I enjoyed meeting and talking with many of our subscribers at the festvals. In 2012 I intend to set up at as many festivals as my schedule will allow. In the early part of the year I plan on being at the River City Music Festival in Portland, Oregon, and Wintergrass in Bellevue, Washington. If you plan on being at either of those events, please stop by the booth and say hello!

The Songwriters

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine columnist Brad Davis will be extremely busy from January to March of 2012 as he and his crew are traveling to 45 different music stores in the south east (TX, LA, TN, MS, AR, OK) hosting and judging a songwriting contest titled The Songwriters. If you live in any of these states and have written a song that you'd like to showcase, go to http://thesongwriters.biz and check out how you could enter to win some great prizes and opportunities. Even if you don't write songs, go out and check out the contest when it comes to your town! Each event promises to be very entertaining.

Peaceful Bend Americana Music Festival

Each May, for the past 5 or 6 years, our friend Bill Starz has hosted one of the premier flatpicking events in the country in Steeleville, Missouri. This year he is moving the event to a campground and renaming it the Upper Meramec Flatpicking Guitar and Mandolin Camp and Americana Music Fest. Tim May and I will be teaching there this year and our good friends Wil Maring and Robert Bowlin will be there as well, and Special Concensus will be performing. For more information check out their facebook page.

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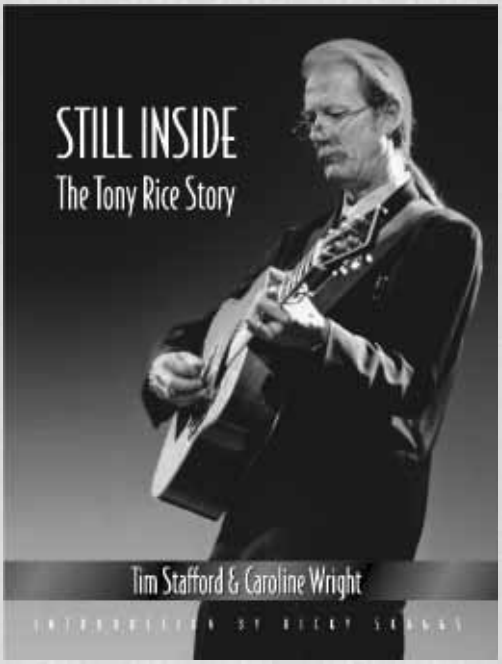
Now Available! Two New Biographical Books covering flatpicking guitar's two most influential performers: Tony Rice and Doc Watson!

Still Inside:
The Tony Rice Story

by Tim Stafford & Caroline Wright



A decade in the making, Still Inside: The Tony Rice Story delivers Tony's tale in his own inimitable words, and in anecdotes and observations from his friends, family, fans, and fellow musicians.

Tony's long road has taken him from coast to coast and around the world, through historic recordings and appearances that often profoundly move those who experience them. More than 100 people were interviewed for this book, sharing memories of Tony and discussing his indelible impact on their own music. Alison Krauss, J.D. Crowe, Sam Bush, Béla Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Ricky Skaggs, David Grisman, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Peter Rowan, and many others contribute intimate stories and frank observations of this private, enigmatic man.

In the book's final chapter, co-author Tim Stafford—a highly respected acoustic guitarist in his own right—provides insight into Tony's technique, timing, right hand, choice of picks, and much more. Tim also discusses Tony's prize possession, the 1935 Martin D-28 Herringbone guitar formerly owned by the great Clarence White.

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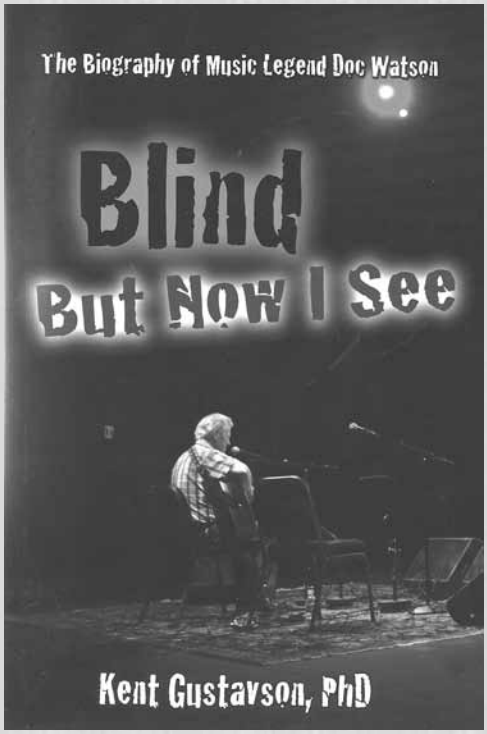

Blind But Now I See:
The Biography of Music Legend Doc Watson

by Kent Gustavson

From the day he stepped off the bus in New York City, North Carolina music legend Doc Watson changed the music world forever. His influence has been recognized by presidents and by the heroes of modern music, from country stars to rock and roll idols. This is a biography of a flatpicking legend.

Featuring brand new interviews with:
- Ben Harper of The Innocent Criminals
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- Pat Donohue of The Prairie Home Companion
- David Grisman of Garcia/Grisman and Old and in the Way
- Sam Bush, The Father of Newgrass
- Guy Clark, Texas Songwriting Legend
- Michelle Shocked, Greg Brown, Mike Marshall, Tom Paxton, Maria Muldaur
- And many more!

Both Books are Available at www.flatpickingmercantile.com

Jack Pearson

Photo: Christine Humphries

When I ran into David Grier at the River City Music Festival in Portland, Oregon, in January of 2011 he said, "You should write an article about Jack Pearson. He is the best guitar player in Nashville." Coming from David Grier that is quite a compliment and, considering all of the great guitar players in Nashville, that is a bold statement. But if you listen to Jack play, it is hard to dispute that he is definitely up there with the best of them in Nashville, or anywhere else in the world. When I posted that David Grier quote on Facebook, two-time National Flatpicking Champion Roy Curry chimed in to say, "Jack can play any style and he is one of the best in Nashville or anywhere!! He can sing his butt off, play mandolin, slide guitar, old time banjo, fingerstyle, jazz, blues, whatever. He has a touch and feel that just about can't be taught, but luckily it can be enjoyed! A humble, cool guy that I always enjoy hearing, except afterwards I feel like selling everything I own."

by Dan Miller

The flatpicking world has recently started to discover Jack because he is playing more acoustic music these days and playing gigs with guys like David Grier, Shad Cobb, and Stuart Duncan. However, the electric rock, blues, and jazz worlds have known about Jack Pearson for a long time. During the 1990s Jack was a member of The Allman Brothers Band and also performed in Gregg Allman's solo band. Gregg Allman has said, "Jack Pearson is tops—he really is. That guy can do it all. As a guitarist, songwriter, and vocalist, he is amazing…There is no question that Jack Pearson is one of the most accomplished cats I've ever played with…" Dickey Betts was so impressed with Jack that after the two had a chance to play together he gave Jack one of Duane Allman's slides as a gift. Ed King of Lynyrd Skynyrd (and Strawberry Alarm Clock) has said, "Jack is one of the best players in all the world. Effortless..." Chet Atkins said, "Jack Pearson, a very sophisticated guitar player...very sophisticated!" Charlie Daniels said, "He's got to be one of the finest pickers on the planet." The praise and respect for Jack's playing from other top professional musicians goes on and on. *Vintage Guitar Magazine* said, "If you only check out one player, make that player Jack Pearson!" I agree, you really need to check him out.

Jack Pearson was born in 1960 in Nashville, Tennessee. His father had been a banjo player in the Uncle Dave Macon style, but he didn't play much after Jack was born. Jack stated that he only heard his father play banjo a few times. However, Jack had an old brother, Stanley, who was eighteen years his senior, who played the guitar. Jack said, "I remember watching my brother play the guitar and it looked like he was having so much fun." Jack started playing at the age of twelve. He said, "I wanted to start learning how to play earlier, but I was so small I couldn't get my arms around his big acoustic guitar. My parents bought me a small plastic guitar to pacify me. We were poor and so I guess they never thought about buying a ¾ size guitar."

When Jack was finally big enough to reach around the guitar, his brother got him started and then Jack spent hours with the record player learning songs by ear. The first song he learned was a Jimmy Rodgers tune and he also learned some bluegrass songs and Carter Family standards. He said, "I liked everything. My oldest brother had some records from the 50s and 60s —Carl Perkins, Scotty Moore, Chuck Berry, Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Lightnin' Hopkins,

The Ventures. My sister had Motown records and my other brother had stuff from the 70s. I listened to all of it and tried to learn how to play it." Jack said that he not only worked to learn the notes, but also did his best to duplicate the tone, groove, and feeling of the songs.

The first thing that Jack's brother Stanley gave him when Jack started to learn how to play was a chart that had a layout of the guitar fingerboard and the name of every note at each fret. Jack said, "He made me memorize where every note on the fingerboard was located. I started seeing how everything is connected on the neck. I asked him if he knew the notes, he said, 'No... but you need to learn 'em.' He also gave me my first slide and told me I needed to learn how to play slide guitar."

After playing the acoustic guitar for about a year, Jack got an electric guitar. For a long time, starting at the age of 14, he played both instruments in a string of various rock, blues, country, and jazz bands. Sometimes Jack played in as many as three or four bands at one time. He said, "I was playing everything from George Jones, to Jimi Hendrix, to Santana, to Conway Twitty. We might play a polka, then 'Sweet Home Alabama,' then 'Wildwood Flower'. We did it all and played anywhere that we could make a few bucks.'

By the time Jack was 17 he left home and went on the road with a southern rock band called Renegade. Jack had gone to watch the band play at a local club and asked them if he could sit in. The next day the band's slide player, Lee Roy Parnell, asked Jack to join them. In an interview with *Hittin' The Note Magazine*, Lee Roy said, "…I wanted him in the band real bad. Jack was just so good and so right, and I felt the vibe right away. The other guys were saying, 'we don't really need another guitarist' but I simply told them 'Let me put it to you like this — if Jack don't go, I don't go.'"

When asked to comment about his time with Renegade, Jack jokingly said, "We knew how to starve!" Although Renegade later disbanded, Jack and Lee Roy moved to Austin, Texas, in 1979 and started The Lee Roy Parnell Band. That band opened for such acts as Taj Mahal, Joe Ely and Jerry Jeff Walker. While in Austin, Jack often sat in with W.C. Clark; met keyboardist Reese Wynans (with whom he still plays); and had the privilege of jamming with Stevie Ray Vaughan and Bonnie Raitt. However, it was still hard to make a living, so he soon decided to head back to Tennessee. In 1980 he put everything he owned on a bus and headed home.

After returning to Tennessee, Jack continued to play as a freelance sideman and had his own band to "fill in the gaps." He played in and around Nashville and also spent some time in Muscle Shoals and Miami. Jack said, "I'd land in different bands and do my best. It would either go somewhere, or it wouldn't." He was also involved in some studio work when he wasn't on the road. He said, "I love the creative process of recording, but sometimes the studio is not always creative. It depends on who you're working with and the kind of music you are playing. Sometimes it can seem like a 'factory gig' playing pre-fab music."

During the 1980s Jack not only continued to play in rock and electric blues bands, but he also started to deeply explore roots blues and jazz. He performed with Jimmy Raney in 1986, with Buddy DeFranco in 1987, and with Groove Holmes in 1988. He also performed with blues harmonica master William Howse starting in 1978. That collaboration led to the formation of a blues band called The Nationals, which performed off and on from the early 1980s through 2002. That band opened shows for The Neville Brothers, Bo Diddley, and Johnny Taylor, to name a few, and recorded a CD in 1990.

Outside of their work with The Nationals, Jack and William also often performed acoustic country blues as a duo. Their duo act was part of the bill at The Ryman Auditorium with The Fairfield Four and The Nashville Bluegrass Band, and they have also opened for Doc Watson, Honey Boy Edwards, Yank Rachell and Johnny Shines. In 1989 Jack began working with Delbert McClinton and in 1990 he started performing with Jimmy Hall, from Wet Willie fame. Jack contributed several co-written songs to Jimmy's 1996 recording *Rendezvous with The Blues*.

In 1993, Jack was asked by his friend Warren Haynes, a member of the Allman Brothers band, to sub for Dickey Betts during an Allman Brothers tour. When he was a kid Jack's brother-in-law had given him a copy of the Allman Brothers *Live at Fillmore East* album and said, "You need to learn how to play all of this." And he did! Jack said he learned every guitar part on the record and the Allman Brothers became his favorite band. So, although he had virtually no time to prepare before he went out with the band the first time, it wasn't a problem because he was already familiar with much of their repertoire. He flew to Dallas, met with Warren to work out some of the guitar harmonies in a hotel room, and then the next night hit the stage with The Allman Brothers Band in front of a crowd of 20,000 people.

Shortly after his first tour with the Allman Brothers, Gregg Allman asked Jack to go on the road with his solo band, Gregg Allman & Friends. That led to Gregg asking Jack

Photo: Christine Humphries

Jack Pearson and David Grier performing at the Fiddle & Pick in Pegram, TN

Photo: Christine Humphries

Tim May, Jack Pearson, and David Grier performing at the Fiddle & Pick in Pegram, TN

to join the Allman Brothers when Warren left in 1997.

In preparation for his first tour as a band member, Jack traveled to Dickey Bett's home so they could do a little pickin' and get to know each other better. After playing a few songs Dickey got up and left the room. When he returned, he honored Jack by presenting him with one of Duane Allman's slides. Later, Jack was asked to play Duane's Dobro (the one Duane used on "Little Martha"). In an interview for *Guitar World* Gregg Allman said, "After he played with [Jack], Dickey said, 'Either we hire him or I ask him for lessons.'" Allman Brother's founding member Butch Trucks, remembered "Pearson is a great slide player…a strong rhythm guitarist, who helps lay a groove about 10 miles wide behind what Dickey is doing. When Pearson finished playing 'Dreams' at one rehearsal, Betts fell on the floor and kissed his feet. A real feeling came through. Dickey loved it."

Jack stayed with The Allman Brothers until 1999 when he had to quit due to a problem with tinnitus (ringing in the ears) that was exacerbated by the volume of The Allman Brothers shows. Jack said, "The tinnitus got so bad that I had to quit." Derek Trucks joined the band replacing Jack. Later Dickey left the band and, eventually, Warren Haynes rejoined the group. Jack receives the call to sub when needed, including filling in for both Warren and Derek on multiple tours. Jack has had the unique opportunity to play in the band at various times with Warren, Dickey and Derek. He still visits with the band and sits in when they play in a nearby city.

Over the years Jack has worked with a very impressive list of recording and performing artists including The Allman Brothers Band (member from 1997-1999), Gregg Allman, Vince Gill, Rodney Atkins, Delbert McClinton, Jimmy Buffett, Earl Scruggs, Chris LeDoux, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Mac McAnally, Amy Grant, Groove Holmes, Faith Hill, Lee Ann Womack, Ronnie Milsap, T. Graham Brown, Jimmy Hall, Gov't Mule, Buddy DeFranco, Shelby Lynne, Jimmy Raney, Jim Horn, Bonnie Bramlett, Mundell Lowe, The Jordanaires, Lee Roy Parnell, Billy Montana, Kirk Whalum, Jimmy Nalls, Chuck Leavell and more. Jack mentions that other career highlights include picking with Chet Atkins in Chet's kitchen, and meeting some of the other great players who have influenced him, including Joe Pass, B.B. King, and Albert King.

Jack has always preferred the creative part of being on the road with a band. He said, "I love improvisation. I remember back when I was 18, I said to the band, 'Let's play something we've never played before.' I wanted to just start playing and see where we could take it. Nobody knew how to do it, but I wanted to do it, so I started to learn by just doing it."

When asked about his approach to improvisation, Jack's first response was, "I don't look at any note that I play as a 'mistake.' I love when I'm playing a line and I hit an unexpected note. I've learned to just relax and go with it and create a new line. I love going out on a limb and then bringing it back in to resolve. I don't see anything that I might play at any time as a mistake. If I hit an unintended note, I'll allow that note to lead me somewhere to play something that I've never played before. All of the notes are available for you to play at any time. If you can learn how to use dynamics, articulation, and phrasing, you can learn how to make any note fit. When I was a kid some people would say, 'You can't play that note.' But, the way I see it now, every note is possible. You can learn how to turn 'mistakes' into new lines that can take you into unexplored territory. With practice and experience, you can make any 'wrong' note work. Well, sometimes….(laughs). That is what makes it exciting and interesting. But, I have landed on some notes on the wrong beat and it sounds awful (laughs)."

One thing that has helped Jack create the various lines that he plays in his solos is listening to a lot of different styles of music. He said, "Sometimes I'll be playing and I'll hear a saxophone line in my head and I'll follow that. I don't just think about the guitar. I'm thinking of how lines are played on other instruments as well." Jack said that the two things that helped open up the fret board for him, and thus help discover possibilities on the guitar, were memorizing the notes on the fretboard when he was a kid and then later studying how chord shapes work together.

Many beginning-to-intermediate level guitar players find improvisation frightening because they are afraid that if they get away from what they have memorized, they will "make a mistake" which can lead to the dreaded "crash and burn." When asked about this, Jack said, "I was the same way when I started. I had memorized all of this stuff from records when I was a kid and I'd play the same songs with the same licks every time. I had to force myself to get away from playing those same licks. It takes a lot of work before you can start really having fun with it!"

When asked if he could suggest something to work on that would help players begin to learn how to improvise, Jack said, "Take just 3 or 4 or 5 notes and play them in as many different combinations as possible. Vary

the note order, the rhythms, the melody, the phrasing, the accents, and all the other variables that are available to you on your instrument. For example, play just the notes D, E, F#, G, and A. These notes will work in several keys. I started doing this when I was a teenager and decided that I didn't want to keep playing another old lick. Once you work with a few notes in this way, start to add some other notes and you can slowly expand your vocabulary."

Jack also likes to work with other kinds of exercises that limit your choices to certain notes, scales, strings, or areas of the neck in order to help break out of a rut. One exercise that he still does to this day is to play solos on just one string, or just two strings. He also practices finger-stretching exercises as part of his warm up routine, which includes running through major scales and basic chord shapes. He will routinely isolate left hand moves that are giving him trouble and will run through them over and over. He said, "I find that any move will get easier after you've practiced it a thousand times. I always tell myself, 'If it was easy, then everyone could do it.' The hard work pays off though because once you've put in the hard work it becomes a lot of fun."

Regarding the hard work that it takes in order to become an accomplished player, Jack said, "Playing is not practice. I spend time playing, but I also spend time working on fundamentals. I focus on weaknesses until I can turn my weaknesses into strengths." Most people who see Jack play comment on the smoothness and fluidness of his technique. Jack said that he has worked very hard on economy of motion and on good tone production. He continues to work on rudimentary things like pick grip, pick angle, pick attack, and articulation of the elbow, wrist, and finger joints in order to develop his fluidity, accuracy, speed, and tone. He will alter his technique, pick grip and attack based on the kind of tone that he wants to present at any given time.

In addition to focusing on technique, Jack has also spent time throughout his career intensely focusing on different styles of music. An early fascination with the blues led to his discovery of early jazz and guitar players like Django Reinhardt, Eddie Lang, and Charlie Christian. He says that he loves the way the old jazz players phrased their solos by using more open spaces. He feels like leaving space in the solo is more musical and more expressive. He also likes the way that the old jazz players' music swings and feels that in the last 15 years many newer players tend to use less swing feeling. In addition to the jazz guitarists mentioned above, Jack's jazz influences include Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Kenny Burrell, Oscar Peterson, Johnny Griffin, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gilliespie, Art Tatum, Wynton Kelly, Chet Baker, and Clarke Terry.

Part of Jack's ability to absorb so many different styles of music goes beyond his intense focus and his highly refined right and left hand technique. His ability to feel the music and create a groove; interpret, understand, and duplicate tone and phrasing; and really listen to what is going on in the music informs everything that he does on the guitar. When asked about listening, Jack said, "I once read an interview with the great saxophone player Stanley Turrentine where he said that his father (also a sax player) had him go and stand in the corner of a room and play a C note until he could 'hear it.' It is hard to understand what that means until you can really listen and hear the nuances that are brought out. When you can hit that note just right the sound, all of the sudden, is big and fat and open." Learning how to listen with intense concentration and awareness is the key to discovering that sound.

Lately Jack is becoming well known to bluegrass players around Nashville because he has been out picking with guys like David Grier, Shad Cobb, and Stuart Duncan. When asked how he met David Grier, Jack said, "We were playing the same show. It was a benefit after the flood in Nashville. I saw David in the dressing room and told him that I was a big fan. We got together and jammed for 6 hours. The next time we got together with Shad Cobb and we jammed for 9 hours. It's like that every time we get together these days."

Even though Jack has been playing the guitar for most of his 51 years, he said that he is still like a kid. He said, "I love to learn new things and I love performing. I was performing with three different bands on the Grand Ole Opry recently and I had a ball. After the show I went to Cracker Barrel to get something to eat. An old man was there who had seen me play at the Opry and asked if it was my first time on the Opry. I've played there many times, so I told him, 'No.' He said that I looked so excited, and looked like I was having so much fun, that he assumed that it must have been my first time."

Over the years Jack has released three solo projects and one duo project with William Howse, which can all be purchased from his website, www.jackpearson.com. The first, *Step Out*, was released in 1994. This disc features ten of Jack's original tunes (vocals and instrumentals), including "I'm Not Crying," a tune that he performed with The Allman Brothers Band. The second solo CD, *Jack Pearson*, was released in 1999. This CD features 12 original instrumentals and a slew of top-notch guest artists. Both of these CDs offer a wide range of musical styles, from Gospel, to jazz and rock, to Latin, blues, and funk.

Jack Pearson

In 1999 Jack also released a duo CD with blues master William Howse. The two perform authentic blues originals. William plays the harmonica and Jack plays acoustic and resonator guitars, with a lot of slide work. If you enjoy early country acoustic blues, you will love this recording.

Jack's most recent solo CD, *Do What's Right*, was released in 2007. Eight of the nine tracks are Jack Pearson originals and all have extended solos and improvisations. The shortest tune on the recording is 4:44 in length. The longest cut is a two-tune medley that is 14:35. The music on this CD reflected what Jack had been performing in his live shows during that time.

Currently Jack is working on a few new projects that will feature some of the hundreds of tunes that he has written over the years. Jack said, "I'm always writing songs, but with all of the time I've been spending on the road it has been hard to get into the studio to record them." One of his goals next year is to put many of those songs out on CD. Additionally, Jack would also like to record projects with David Grier, Tommy Emmanuel, and Keb Mo. He has been talking with these artists about these projects and is working to find the time to get them done.

Over the last four years Jack Pearson has mostly turned his attention towards acoustic music. For those of us who love the acoustic guitar and flatpicking, that is great news! When a guy like Jack Pearson gets out to perform and jam with our heroes in the bluegrass world, it can do nothing but elevate the music and musicians. If you have not heard or seen Jack play, you owe it to yourself to check him out. Watching him play the guitar is a lesson in efficiency and fluidity. These days every time I pick up the guitar I think about trying to play with the same relaxed and fluid movements of Jack Pearson.

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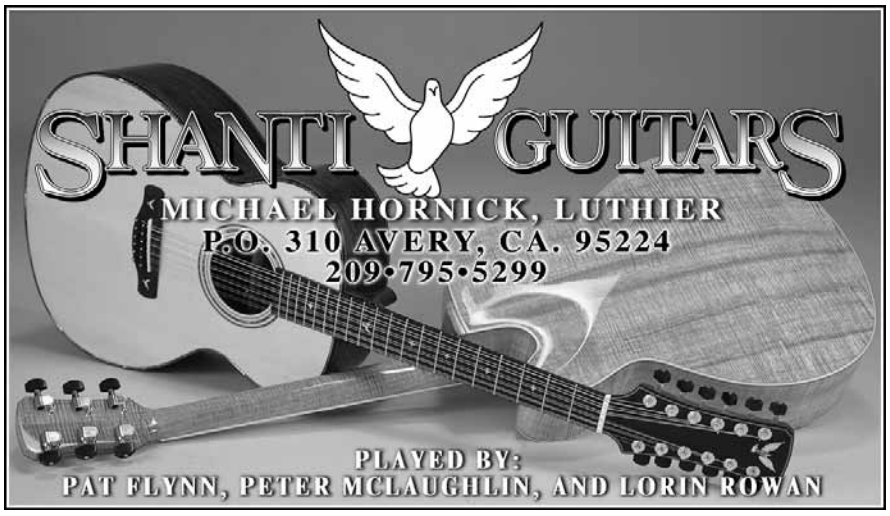

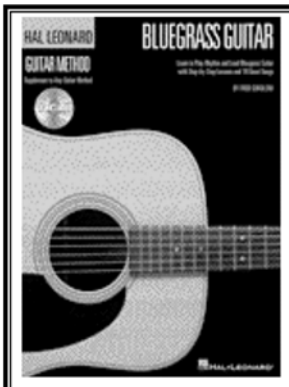

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Blackberry Pickin'

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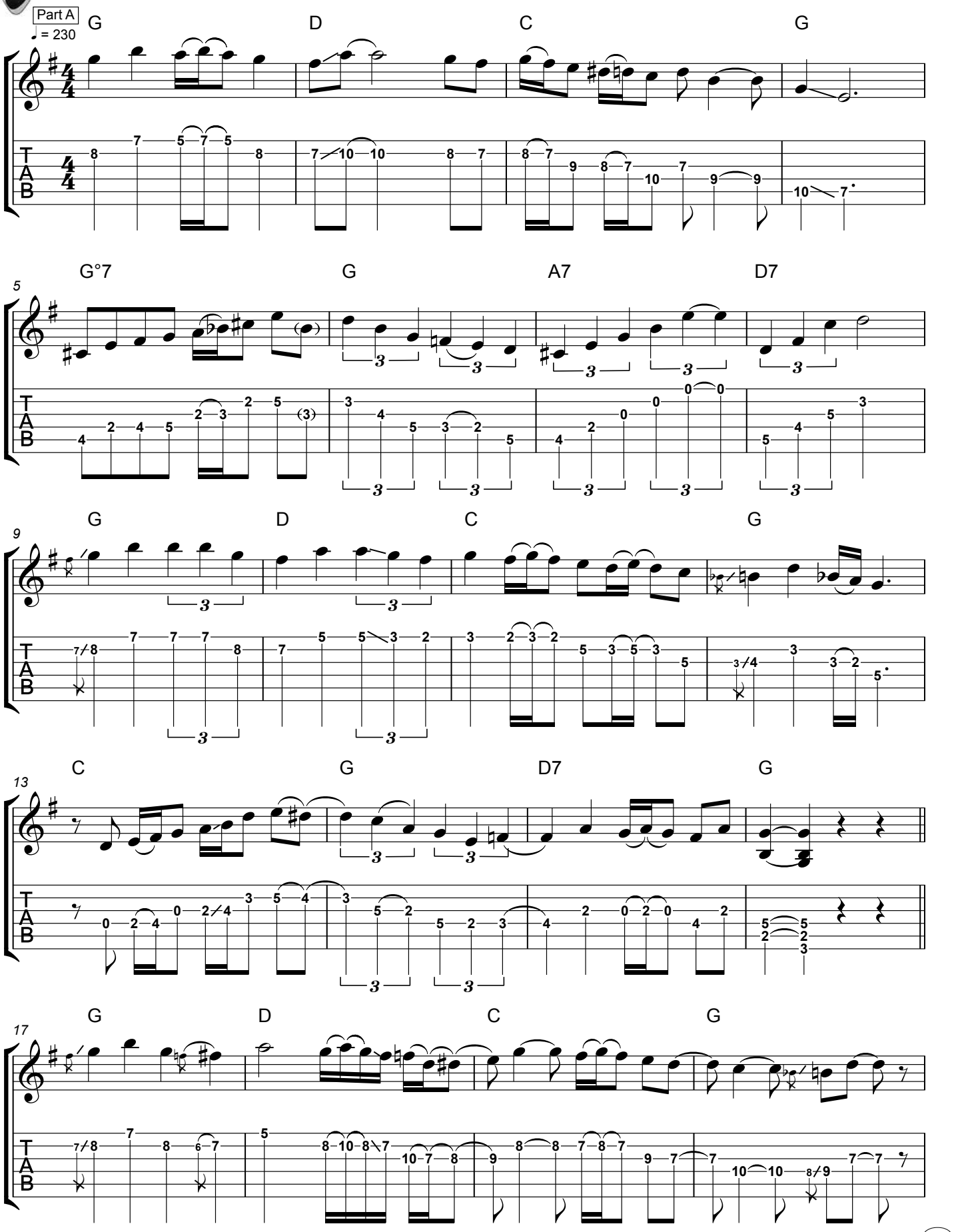
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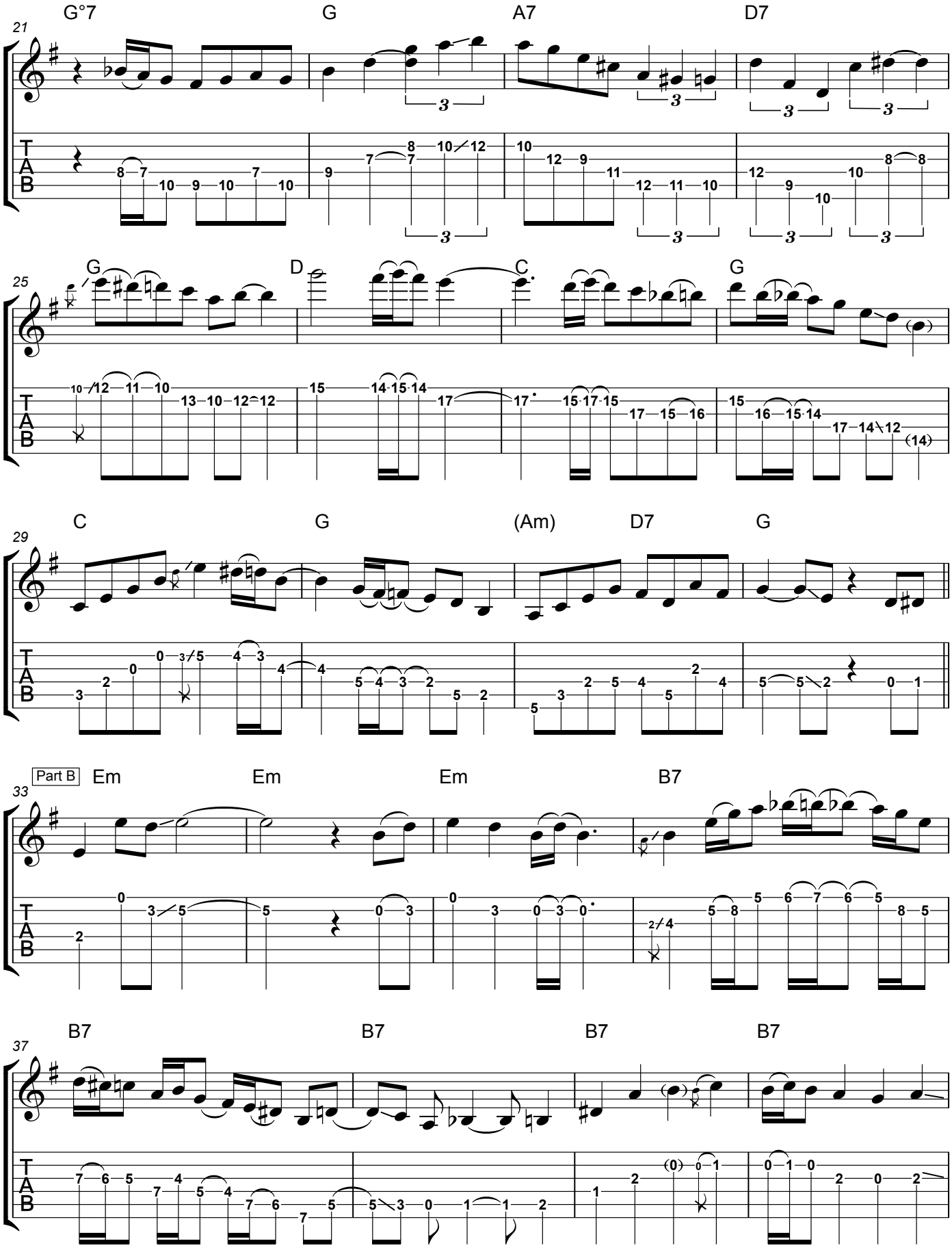
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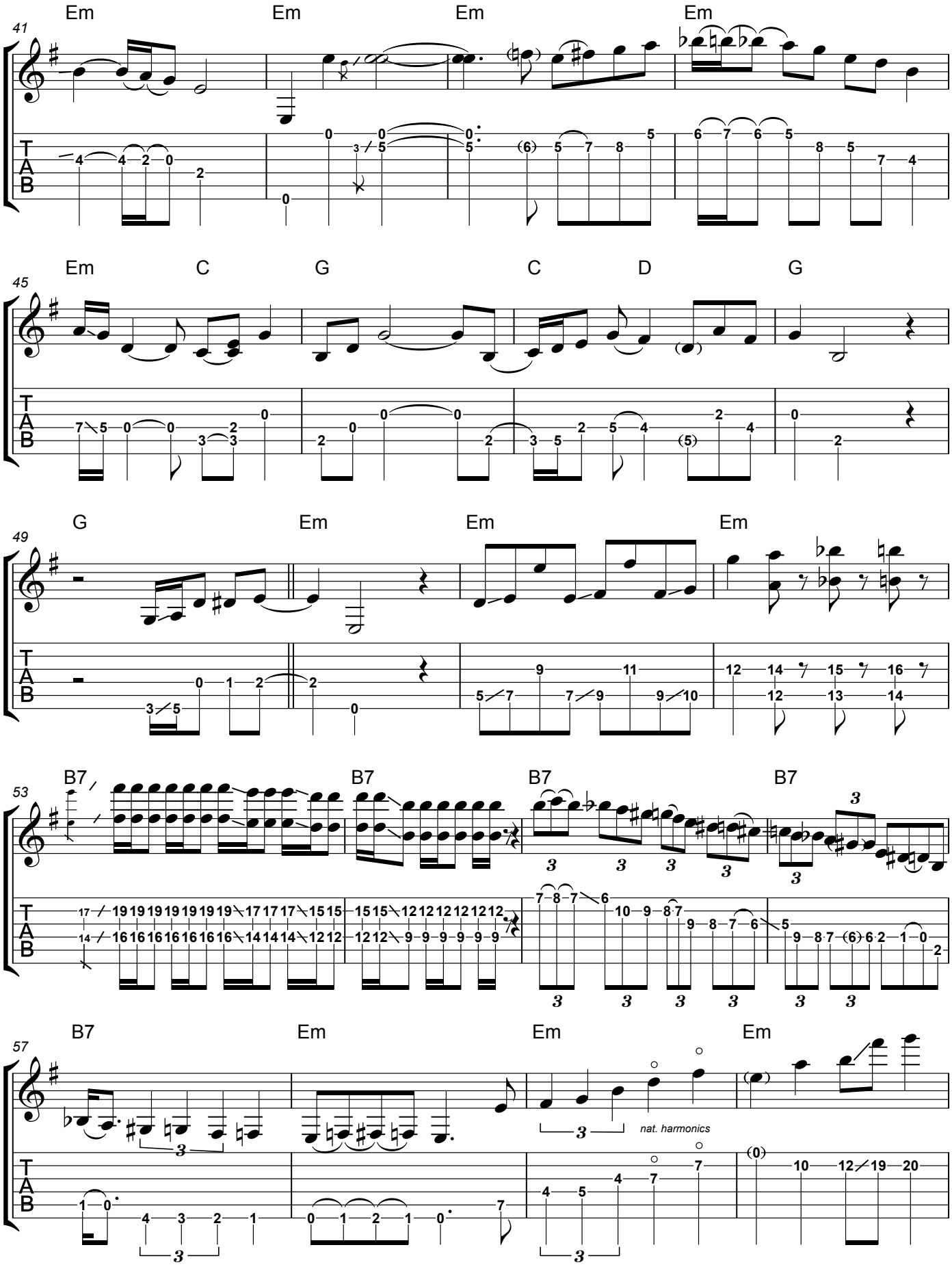
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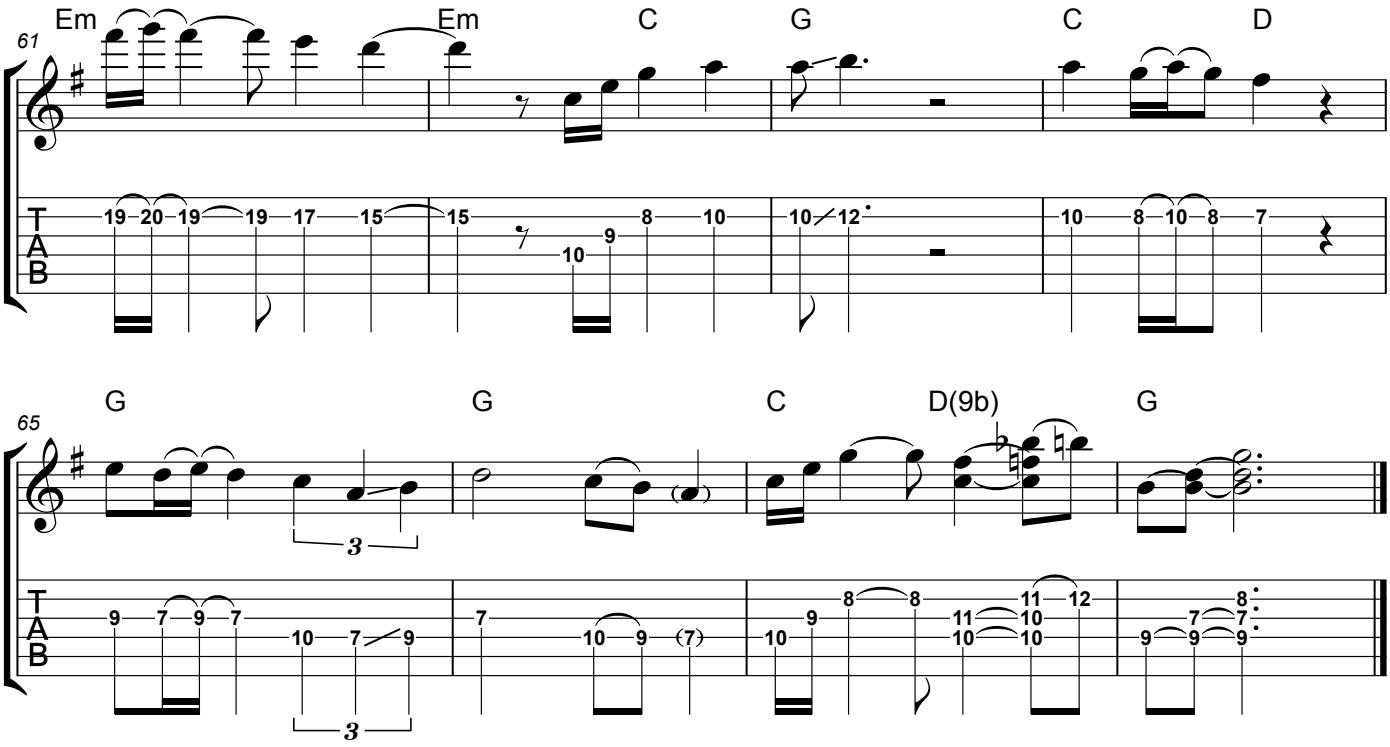
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Bluegrass Rhythm Guitar

by Joe Carr

I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now?—Henry "Homer" Haynes

Henry "Homer" Haynes (1920-1971) was half of the comedy duo Homer and Jethro, whose 35-year career started in 1936 and ended with Henry's death from a heart attack. Commercially successful, Homer and Jethro recorded numerous albums (over 25 with RCA alone), and were well respected among musicians as world-class players on their respective instruments. Their jazz releases *Playing It Straight* (1962) and *It Ain't Necessarily Square* (1967) remain popular among fans, especially mandolin players who recognize Jethro (1920-1989) as one of the greatest players of that instrument.

Haynes, despite being known as a great rhythm guitarist among knowledgeable musicians, has not received the kind of wide acclaim his partner enjoys. But just a quick listen to "I Want to be Happy" or "I Found a New Baby" from *Playing It Straight* shows how skilled he was at setting a driving rhythm. He used an acoustic arch top guitar throughout his career and is pictured with various high-end instruments including his 1959 D'Angelico Excel (http://www.gruhn.com/features/excel/ar3919.html), which Gruhn Guitars listed and reported sold for $65,000.

The transcriptionon the next page is my approximation of Haynes' rhythm on "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now?" (available on iTunes). The changes are accurate by my estimation, but the exact chord shapes used by Haynes may not all be here. There are several important musical ideas to point out. First, here's the basic progression.

D A7 D D
D F# (G B7) Em
Em B7 Em Em
E7 E7 A7 A7
D A7 D D
D F# (G B7) Em
G Gm (D F#) B7
Em A7 D D

The D at the beginning is replaced with a D major 7th. This is called direct substitution.

During the first A7 chord, Haynes uses a simple substitution rule: for a dominant chord, you can substitute a minor built on the fifth of the dominant. Hence, four beats of A7 becomes two beats of Em9 and two of A7.

Measures 7 and 8 are both D, which he changes to D Em F#m Em. This is called a scale-wise substitution. In numbers, we are playing 1, 2m, 3m, 2m to replace two measures of the one chord.

Measures 18 and 19 are labeled a turnaround. This 1-#1dim-2m-5 progression "turns" the song around back to the beginning. It should be left out when ending the song. By the way, Homer and Jethro's jazz albums are available on one CD, available through www.elderly.com. Once again, many, many thanks to Gerald Jones for his talented mandolin and guitar work on the CD recording for this issue.

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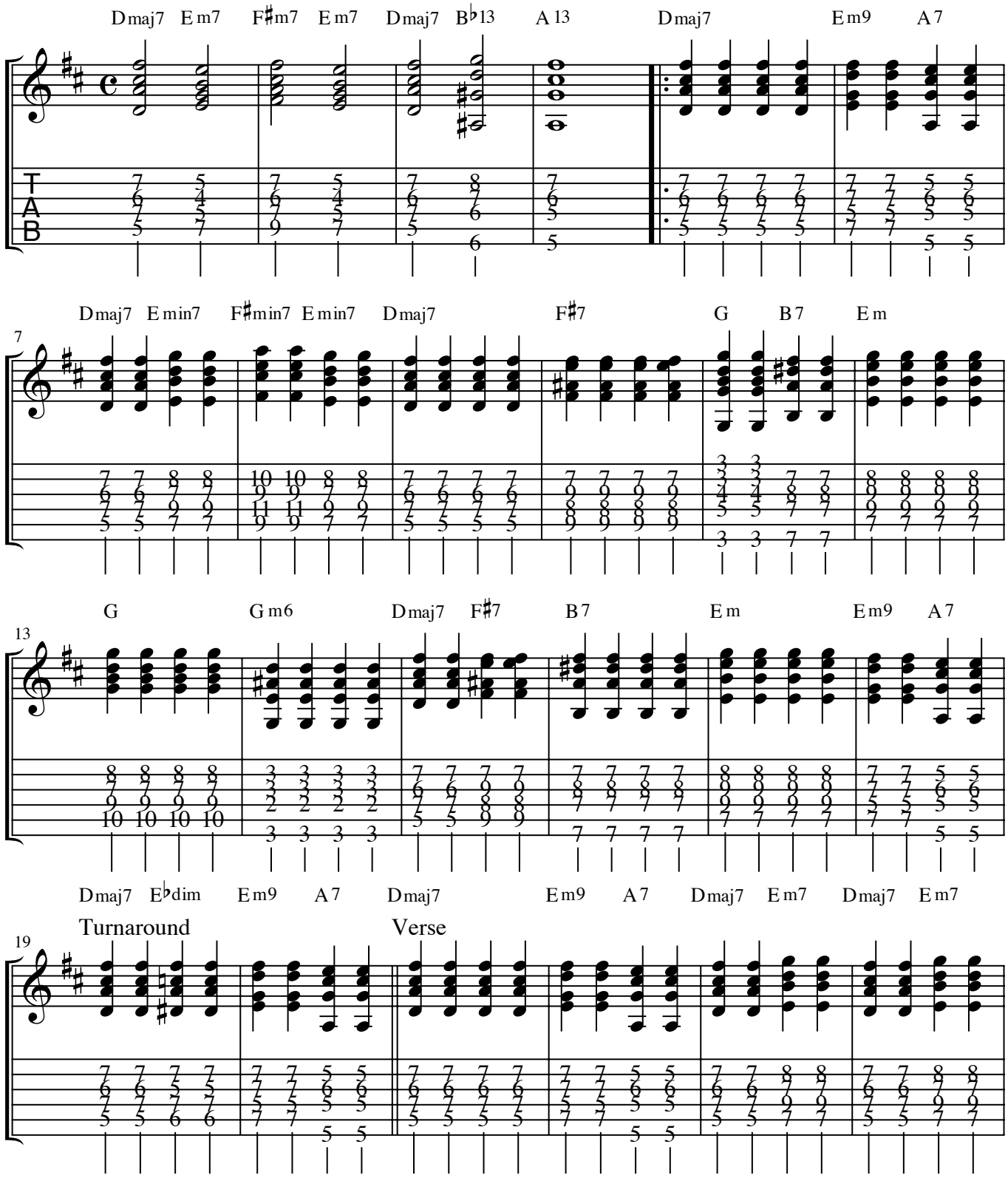
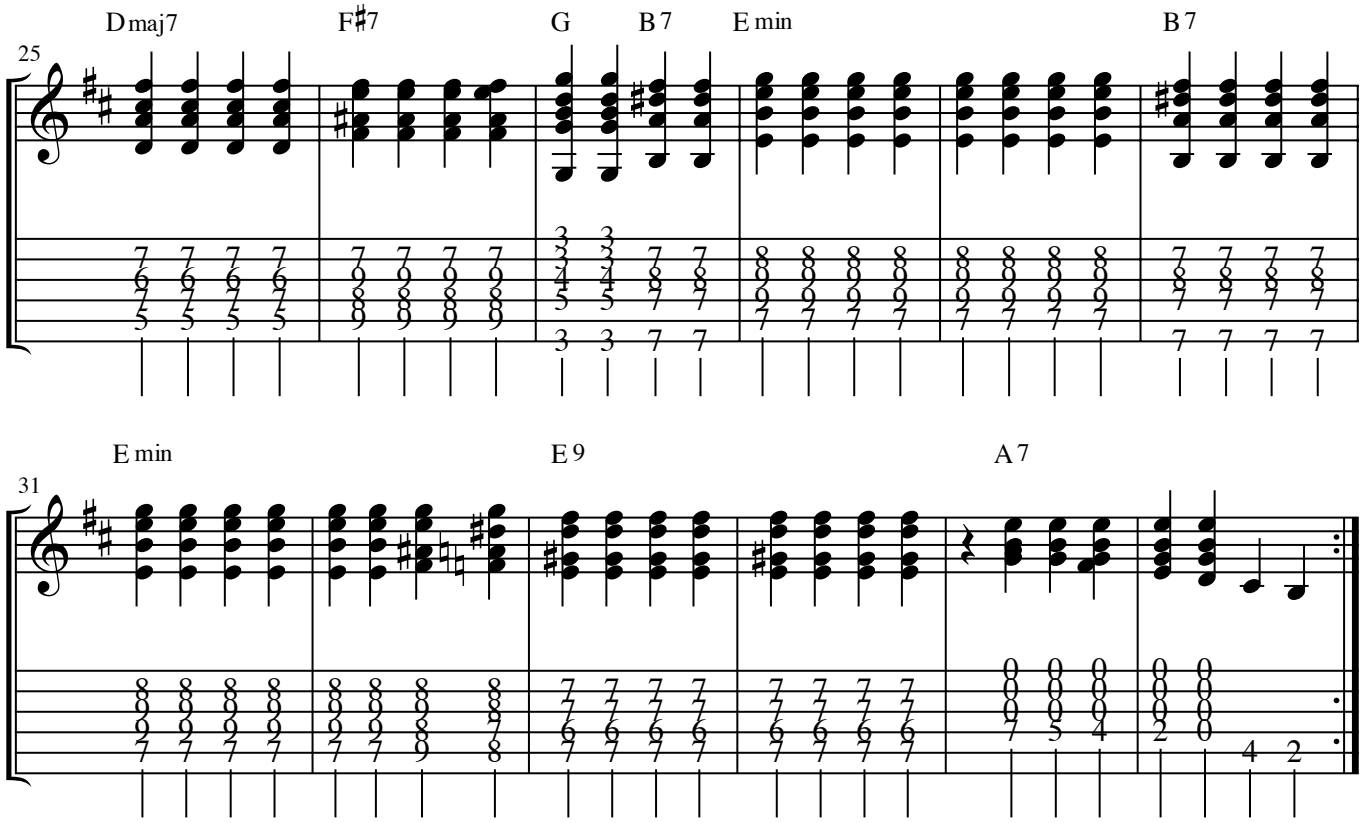
I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now — Rhythm

Transcribed by Joe Carr


Dmaj7 Em7 F♯m7 Em7 Dmaj7 B♭13 A13 Dmaj7 Em9 A7
7 Dmaj7 Emin7 F♯min7 Emin7 Dmaj7 F♯7 G B7 Em
13 G Gm6 Dmaj7 F♯7 B7 Em Em9 A7
19 Dmaj7 E♭dim Em9 A7 Dmaj7 Em9 A7 Dmaj7 Em7 Dmaj7 Em7
Turnaround
Verse

I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now — Rhythm (con't)



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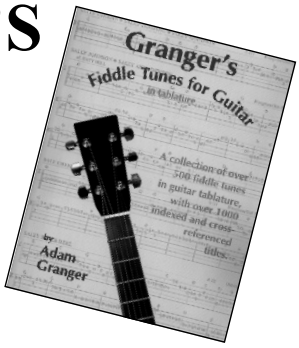
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Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

I Saw the Light

Here's a jam session standard if there ever was one, but you'd be surprised how many guitar players don't know a break to it. So, if you're one of those, let's just learn this one and add it to our list.

First of all, this is the song that is often played in the grand finale at bluegrass festivals. If you know a good break to it, you might just get called on to get up on stage with all the bands. If you don't, you might just find yourself missing out on all the fun.

And if that's not enough incentive for you, this tune has a unique melody, and it presents special problems when you are trying to get ideas for a good break. Although I'm handing you this break on a silver platter, maybe you should peck out the melody on your own, before you listen to my break. This will help you to understand a little bit about where my ideas came from.

If you have been reading and listening to my previous columns, you should find some familiar devices in "I Saw the Light." Now we're getting somewhere. Dan's been cheating! He's been taking standard licks and feeding us leftovers. Yes, guilty as charged, but just because you have played that lick before, doesn't mean you automatically know how to re-apply it appropriately in any old song. That takes a little cobbling.

So, the concept here is that my column today can be more valuable than just an isolated lesson for "I Saw the Light," if you combine it with my previous and future columns. Now you see that the method behind my madness is not to feed a man a fish, but to teach a man to fish. Each column is just one fish, but as you string them all together, you will see the similarities and eventually learn to create your own solos and to improvise.

In the final analysis, I have taken the plain melody, attached a 3-note kick-off to the front of it, emphasized the essential peaks of the melody with "double-stop" harmonies, added a few fill licks, and thrown in the old hot-lick turn-around for a strong and impressive ending. If you think that is easier said than done, I will admit, you're right. That's why you need more than just one example song before you are ready to do it yourself.

If you have any questions, you can call me toll free at 800-543-6125. Also check out some of our other courses at the back of this issue: www.Musicians-Workshop.com. See you next issue.

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I Saw The Light

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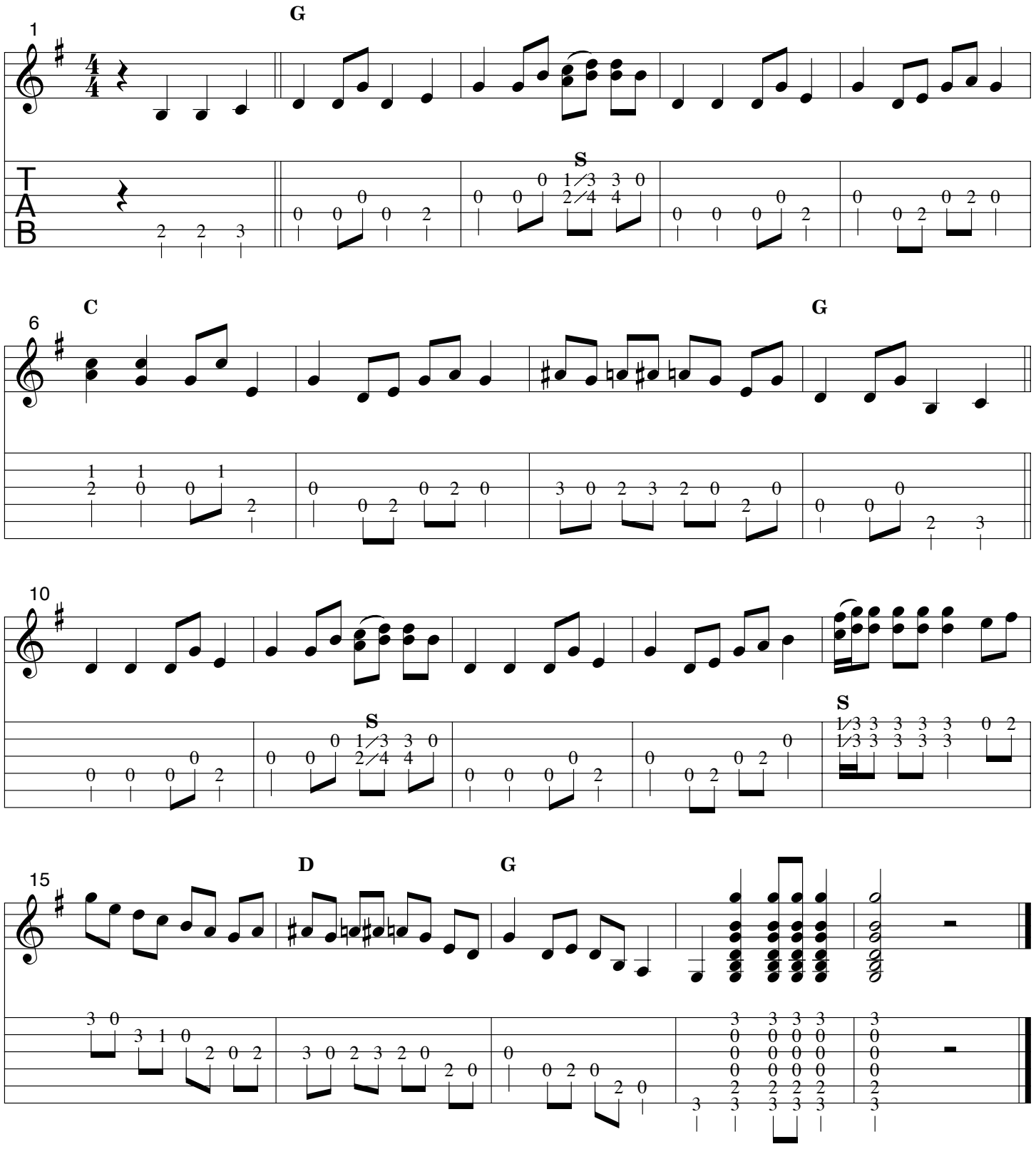
Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

When You're Smilin'

Hi friends and welcome back to my world. Today we are going to work on an arrangement that was greatly influenced by the great Clarence White. I heard him play this when it was first recorded years ago and I play it around the house with great joy. So I thought I would pass this one on to you all. I've been doing this column a long time and feel that most of the songs I pick are in the beginner and intermediate level. This one would be intermediate/advanced and in order to play it smoothly and clean you will need left and right hand control, sustain, crosspicking, down-ups, and the rest of the arsenal needed to pull off this great show tune.

Let's take a look at the arrangement. We start off in a C position and you only need the first two fingers held. But you need to hold this position throughout the first and second measures. Do a strong strum through the strings, as written, but do not go past the highest note written. That will make that melody note jump out along with the tone color of the chord. While the chord is ringing you will crosspick the rest of the measure and then play measure 2. Do the same for measure 3 and 4.

At measure 5 you will need to hold a C6, which is an Am shape with the little finger holding the 5th string, 3rd fret. D-U-rest-U-D is the pick direction as marked.

Measures 9-13 are played in the same format as the opening measures. Hold the chord shape for maximum sustain.

Measure 15: Here is a nest of eighth notes with hammer-ons and pull-offs. The right hand will swing like a pendulum (DUDUDUDU) but hit only the notes as marked. Swinging the right hand DU wide to ensures it keeps correct time as well as being a little easier to play.

I really like the way measures 17-24 ran along. It is a long run that plays around the melody but also runs through the chords C7-F-D7-G7-C "around the horn" as we say. This is a typical progression for the key of C. You can break this run up into 2-measure runs that lead from one chord to another. See if you can crack that code and insert the runs in other songs you play with similar sections of this chord structure.

Measure 29-30: Start this phrase by holding a Dm shape and then run along into the single note melody run.

Measure 30: The run finds the third finger fretting the 1st string 3rd fret and then the 2nd string 4th fret then drag it, sliding back, to the 3rd fret. Watch the DUs in these measures.

Have fun with this cool song and fun arrangement and let me know how it treats you. See you all at Kamp in June. Visit my www.flatpik.com site for lots of new freebies. See you down the road. SK

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When You're Smiling

Audio CD
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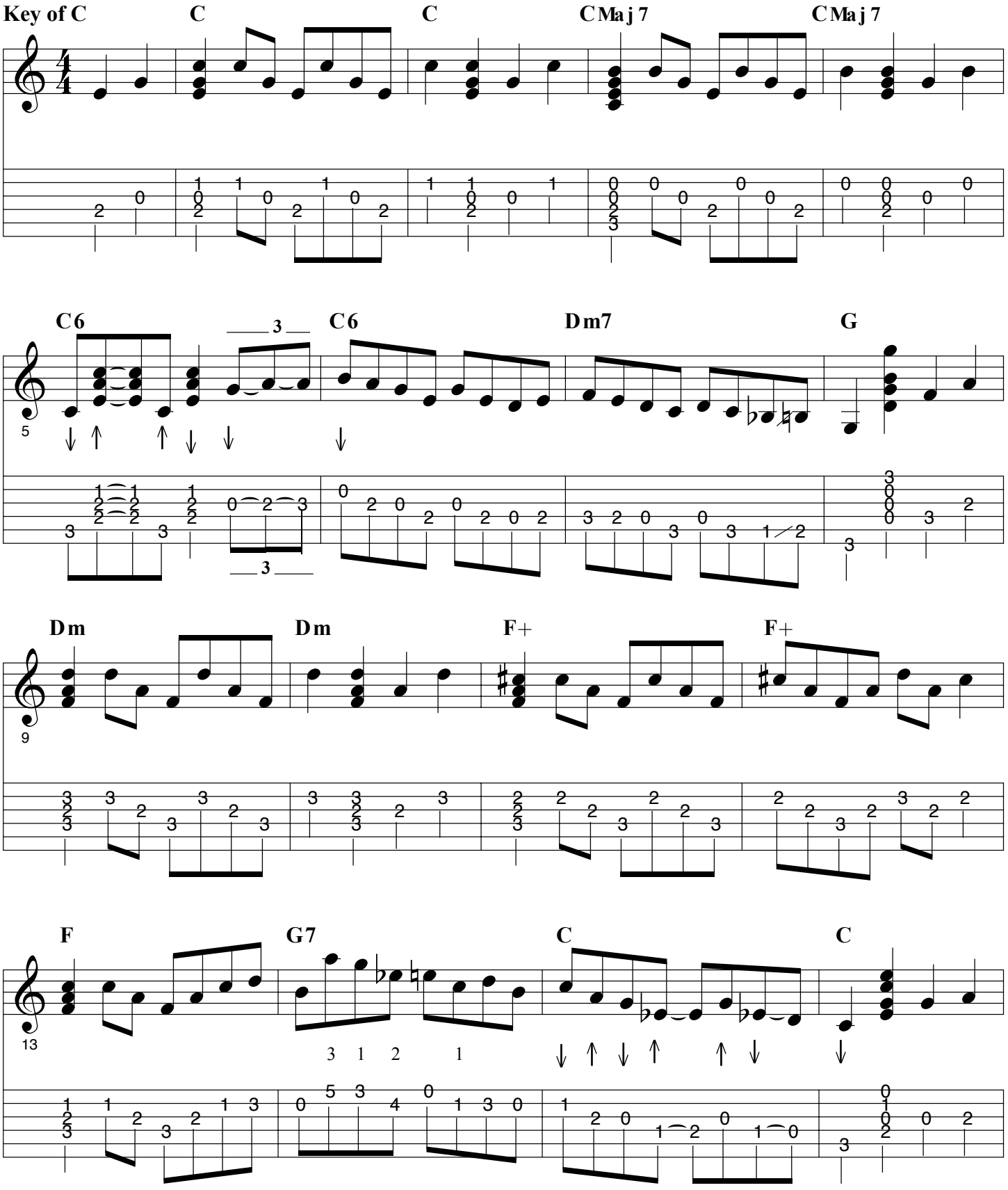
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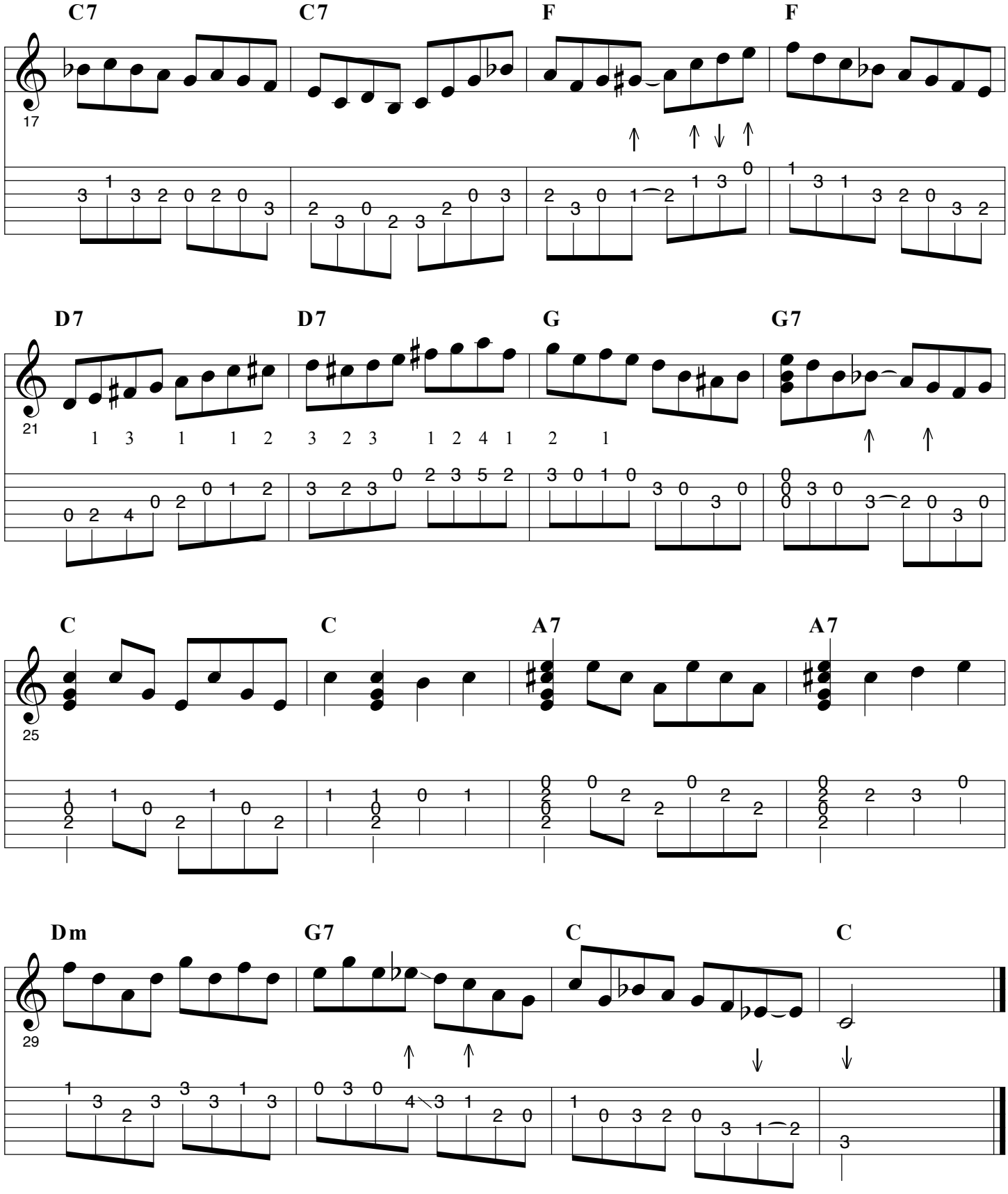
When You're Smiling (con't)



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Taking It To The Next Level: Tex Logan

by John Carlini

Tex Logan is the "real deal." He is a bluegrass "icon," a giant who is among a small handful of the greatest bluegrass fiddlers ever. Two years ago he was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the IBMA.

I have known Tex since my mid-teen years. We met at a bluegrass jam session in New Jersey back in the 60s. I have been very fortunate in my life in that great teachers have appeared when I most needed them. Such was the case with Tex.

He took me under his wing and coached me in the essence of bluegrass music. We became lifelong friends and I consider Tex my "bluegrass mentor"!

I am one of the lucky ones who attended several of Tex's now-legendary parties at his home in NJ. As a teenager, I sat on the floor in his den listening to some of his guests perform. Let's see…Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys, Mike Seeger, the Greenbriar Boys, Bill Keith, David Grisman, Doc Watson. UN-BE-LIEV-A-BLE! It was like walking into my record collection!

Tex is also a prolific composer. His tune, "Christmas Time's A'Comin'", has been recorded by…well, I'll just name a few… Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, Rhonda Vincent, Marty Robbins, Bill Anderson, Ricky Skaggs, and on and on!

That brings us to the subject of this column, Tex's tune "Come Along, Jody." As you go through the melody on your guitar, try to keep in mind that this is essentially a fiddle tune. So the more you can emote like a fiddle, the more successful will be your efforts. You will hear some notes that don't seem to sound right, that is, until you get the entire phrase to speak and get it up to tempo. The notes in question are for the most part chromatic approaches and adjustments. Take a look at that first phrase. It begins by outlining an A major triad (A-C#-E), but it visits that C natural on the way. Then it continues up to define an A7 chord, and still continues up to the flatted 3rd (C natural), finishing with that D# to E slur. That is vintage Tex Logan! Tex actually dictated the melody to me note-for-note as I wrote it out on manuscript paper. It's a great tune and it's lots of fun to improv on as well. Think bluesy bluegrass.

Have a ball with Tex's tune "Come Along, Jody"!

Until next time, I wish you all a happy and productive 2012. — John Carlini

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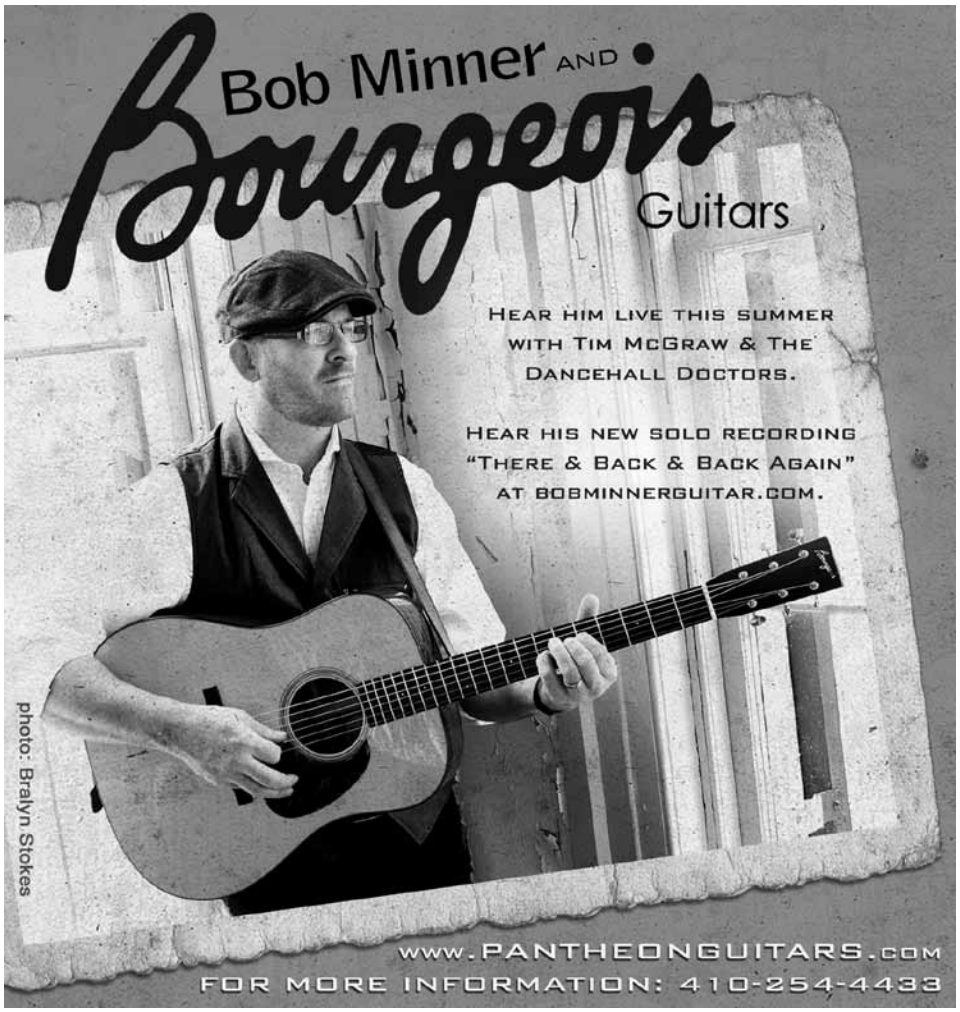
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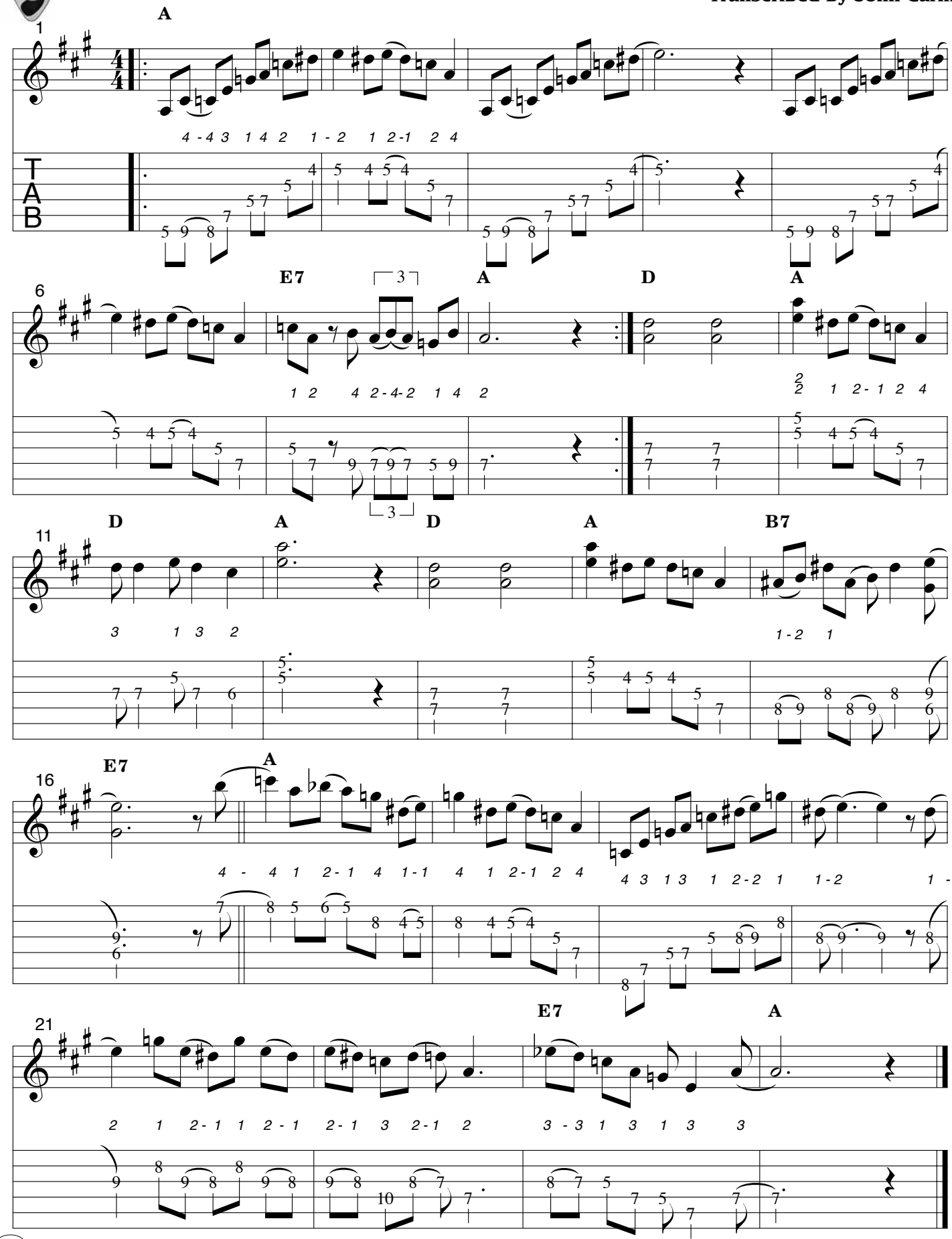
Schenk Guitars

by Dan Miller

Although he has only been building guitars since 2003, Rod Schenk's combination of innovative design, high quality craftsmanship and reasonable pricing has catapulted him to the top tier of boutique acoustic guitar builders in the United States. In 2008 he won his first *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* Player's Choice Gold Award in the Small-Scale Custom Builder category and is still the reigning champion in that category. In 2011 he also won the award for the Player's Choice Guitar of the Year. His guitars are known for their playability, rich tone, and sustain. In addition to design innovation, Schenk offers pricing innovation. The base price of his hand-built, made in the USA, Ophirio Series guitar with Indian Rosewood back and sides and Adirondack top is only $1990, which may make it the least expensive hand-built, solid-body, high quality wood, boutique guitar built in the USA.

Most guitar builders start out as guitar players who are also interested in woodworking. Rod was no different. He played the guitar as a kid and he had a passion for woodworking, influenced by his grandfather who was a shop teacher. However, Rod took a big step beyond the woodshop by earning his college degree in structural engineering. He said, "For me, guitar building was the perfect marriage of structural engineering and woodworking."

Rod built his first guitar in 2003 and had built a few more by 2005, when he was ready for his "first outing." He took the second guitar that he built to the Healdsburg Guitar Show in northern California. The guitar was an FE Grand Fingerstyle model. He sold the one that he brought to the show and went home from Healdsburg with orders for three more.

Rod went to work building guitars to fill the new orders, with additional orders coming in after the show. He owned an engineering firm and was still doing engineering work while building guitars on the side. However, by 2006 he had so many guitar orders that he gave up the engineering business and started building full time. Or, we should probably say that he gave up the engineering company and continued to apply his extensive knowledge of structural engineering towards guitar construction.

To date Rod has introduced a few innovations to the guitar-building world. The first is his "Super-Rod" truss rod and neck assembly. Rod believes that neck stiffness is one of the most important elements to enhance the overall tone and sustain of the guitar, perhaps more important than the soundboard bracing itself. His website explains, "Although the analysis is complicated the basic idea is not. An ultra stiff neck provides a rigid gateway for string energy to transfer into the soundboard. A neck that lacks stiffness acts as a shock absorber, therefore dampening the string's energy and producing less sound and even less sustain." In order to add stiffness to the neck, Rod designed a proprietary truss rod that when combined with an ebony fingerboard and mahogany neck provides "the stiffest neck assembly on the planet."

The truss rod system in the Schenk guitars also acheives micro-adjustability, which allows for very precise adjustments to action and neck relief. The Schenk "Super Rod" truss rods are machined from solid billet steel. Although his truss rods are 15 times more expensive for him to make than the truss rods used by most guitar companies, Rod is willing to pay the price because he feels that the benefits in regards to sustain, sound projection and adjustability are worth it.

Another unique feature that Rod adds to many of his guitar models is the "Micro Bevel." Although many guitar builders are adding the beveled lower bout to allow for player comfort, Rod felt like most of the designs that he saw were inhibiting vibration of the sound board. He said, "Although the bevels that I saw on guitars made playing more comfortable, I felt that they were creating a fixed connection between the soundboard and the side of the guitar and thus limiting the vibration." Rod's answer to the problem was the Micro Bevel. He said, "Our design, which includes special kerfing, allows for comfort without compromising the sound of the guitar."

Another feature of the Schenk guitar models is the larger-than-normal back arch. When you pick up a Schenk guitar, the larger back arch is usually the first feature you will notice that is different than other models of guitars that you may have seen. Rod said that the back arch on Schenk guitars is designed to project a focused and concentrated sound out of the sound hole. He said, "At first is was a challenge to build the guitar with this degree of radius in the back, however, now it is second nature."

The last custom feature that Rod Schenk invented for his guitars is his patented Integrated Side Dot (ISD) tuner. This feature is off-the-chart awesome! When I first saw a Schenk guitar with the ISD Tuner I was quite impressed. The ISD Tuner is a concealed chromatic guitar tuner that is built into the guitar. Using fiber optic technology

and custom electronics the ISD allows you to tune your guitar by viewing the side dots at the 15th, 17th, and 19th frets. If the 15th fret white dot lights up, then the string is flat; if the 19th fret dot lights up, then the string is sharp; if only the 17th fret dot lights up blue, then your string is in tune.

The ISD tuner has been so popular, that Schenk guitars also designed and sells the "Holy Tuner." This is an after-market on-board tuner that can be added to any acoustic guitar. This design allows the player to see the lights by looking down through the soundhole. For more information about the Holy Tuner, go to www.holytuner.com.

Currently there are four models of Schenk guitars available, each allowing for many custom features. The four models are the Ophirio, the FE Grand Fingerstyle, the GK Concert Windwalker, and the RD Nashville Flattpicker. The Ophirio is similar in shape to an OM model guitar, but with the radical Schenk back arch and an optional Micro Bevel. Rod describes the FE Grand Fingerstyle as being similar to a small jumbo, but with a tighter waist, a rounder lower bout, and a radical back arch. The GK Concert Windwalker is described as the "little sister" to the FE Grand Fingerstyle. Rod said, "It is basically the same guitar, but more compact."

The RD Nashville Flattpicker is the Schenk Dreadnought model. When asked how this model differs from the typical Martin Dreadnought design, Rod said that in addition to the Super-Rod truss rod system, the RD provides a larger radiused back arch, an optional Micro-Bevel, and more refined appointments. His bracing pattern is slightly different than the standard Martin design. Rod said, "I conducted a finite element analysis test on guitar tops to analyze where the stresses and strains were most prominent and then I designed my bracing pattern accordingly. Each bracing pattern is catered to the guitar because every guitar shape requires a unique bracing pattern to handle the stress."

On the Schenk Dreadnought models the X-bracing pattern is a bit more forward than standard. Rod uses either Adirondack or Sitka spruce for his braces and engineers them to be lighter than typical bracing. He said, "The stress analysis showed me that I could streamline the bracing design so that I could reduce the weight of the guitar's top and allow for more vibration. This was a perfect structural engineering problem. Through my analysis I was able to remove weight and still have enough structure to withstand the forces induced on the top by the string tension and rotational forces."

Regarding his Dreadnought guitars, Rod said, "With my fingerstyle guitar background, I was able to take the elements of success that were achieved with those guitars and apply them to the RD Nashville Flattpicker. As a result, our Dreadnoughts have the growl and bark of the standard Dreadnought, but they also possess the intricacy, clarity and delicacy of our fingerstlye models, especially up-the-neck. I think that most other Dreadnoughts lose their sparkle up-the-neck, while ours remains clear at any fret. This makes it a very versatile guitar."

Evidentally, many professional players agree that Schenk guitars have that extra something that they just love. Nashville A-list session player Mark Casstevens (who has been on over 400 albums and played on 98 number 1 singles) is now playing Schenk guitars, as is Nashville sideman Bill Cooley (who has toured with Reba McEntire, Alan Jackson, Hal Ketchum, Kathy Mattea). Another top-tier Nashville session player who owns a Schenk is Kerry Marx (who has worked with Johnny Cash, Jerry Reed, and Steve Wariner). Former National Flatpicking Champion Roger Ferguson now plays a Schenk, as does young flatpick phenom Paige Anderson. Additionally, 20 time Grammy award winner, Vince Gill currently has four Schenk guitars on order.

Schenk guitars have accompanied Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Huey Lewis, Trisha Yearwood, Steve Wariner, Carrie Underwood, Kelly Pickler, Trace Atkins, Hal Ketchum, Roy Clark, Jewel, George Jones, Ronnie Milsap, Point of Grace, Marty Stewart and many others. Schenk guitars are played every week at the famous Grand Ole Opry.

Although all features of a Schenk guitar can be customized, Rod typically likes to use Indian Rosewood, Mahogany, Koa, or Sapele for the back and sides and either Adirondack spruce, Engelmann spruce, or cedar for the top. The fretboards are ebony and the necks are either mahogany or sapele. The neck joint is a hybrid mortise and tenon bolt-on design. The tuners are custom Gotoh tuners with a Schenk logo embosed. Schenk uses several types of adhesives, including aliphatic-resin wood glue and cyanoacrylate. His "Acoustic Glass" finish is a thinly applied UV-cured polyester resin – available in high gloss or an "Acoustic Silk" satin finish. The kerfing is aromatic Spanish cedar.

Rod Schenk is a big believer in "Made in America" and so he does not outsource any part of his guitar building to Mexico or over seas, however, he can still offer a hand-built American-made solid-wood guitar at a very reasonable price. In 2011 he build fifty guitars and the orders keep coming in. In a relatively short period of time Rod has built a very strong reputation through his innovative design and reasonable pricing. If you have a higher budget, Schenk Guitars also offers several configurations that are extraordinary, including the Insignia® luxury guitar line that can be in excess of $20,000. If you are in the market for a new guitar, you might want to go to schenkguitars.com and see what they have to offer.

Sharpening the Axe
by Jeff Troxel

A Horizontal Approach to the Fingerboard

I hope you enjoyed the last issue of this magazine, which was devoted to beginning guitarists. There was something in that issue for everyone, no matter what level. The fundamentals are the foundation upon which everything else is built and it never hurts to crawl under the house and check things out once in a while.

With that in mind, I'd like to present a couple of scale exercises that I think you'll find useful. I play through these at the beginning of nearly every practice session and they help to wake up my fingers and synchronize my hands. Both exercises move gradually up the fingerboard and back down again, using open strings as "escape" notes that allow you to move into new positions.

In my experience, the most useful exercises isolate concepts that can be easily applied to real music. I wrote the fingerings for these scales with that very thing in mind; making them flow easily between positions by avoiding finger-stretches and awkward picking maneuvers, while still exploiting some floating note opportunities.

In both exercises below, the four fingers of the left hand will always be kept in adjacent frets; no finger stretching is employed. A position is determined by the fret being played by the first finger (that is, 3rd position means the first finger plays all notes at the 3rd fret and the fourth finger plays all notes at the 6th fret). Positions are indicated between the standard and TAB staves by Roman numerals. Left hand fingerings for both exercises are marked above notes in the standard notation line only when the left hand is out of 1st position.

C Major Horizontal Scale:

The first four measures of this exercise are in 1st position. Starting at the end of bar 5, the entire hand moves to 3rd position to allow the fourth finger to play the 6th fret. Try to let the F note (played by the pinky) last until beat 3 of the next measure to give the notes a connected, chordal sound. In measure 7, hold the C note (played by the third finger on the off-beat of one) until the next position shift on beat 3. You'll notice that particular arrangement of the C, D and E notes on adjacent strings recurring throughout both exercises. Learn to recognize that concept and always strive to make those notes ring into each other.

G Major Horizontal Scale:

This exercise never uses 1st position, which is why there are fingerings written above every note. This exercise also moves further up the fingerboard than the C Major exercise so pay very close attention to fingerings and positions. In the first bar we find our old friend C, D, and E on adjacent strings. It recurs again in bars 2, 3, 4, 13, and 15. Use it to your advantage every time to bring out the ringing notes discussed above. Also strive to make other notes ring into each other whenever possible.

Here are some suggestions to try as you work through these two exercises:

1) Take the first two measures of the C Major exercise and master the notes. Then play those two measures in a non-stop loop, repeating it over and over. When you can play that loop without mistakes, repeat the procedure with the next two measures, etc. Learn both exercises this way in order to really understand and internalize the fingerings and position shifts. Check out my last audio example to see how this is done.

2) Play everything slowly at first. As soon as you have control of the notes start using your metronome.

3) Make sure you breathe evenly and stay relaxed while practicing.

4) Keep the left hand intact when shifting positions. Avoid letting the fingers separate or fly out from the guitar as you move. Keep the thumb behind the second finger of the left hand no matter which position you're in. Also, remember that things change as we move horizontally up the neck. Frets are closer together higher up the neck, so be aware of your finger spacing to avoid losing your sense of the position.

There's a lot to glean from these two exercises. Learn them slowly and methodically to get the most benefit. This will be the first installment of a series of columns I plan to do on playing horizontally so try to get these working for you so you'll be ready for next time. As always, feel free to email me with questions and comments. Good luck.

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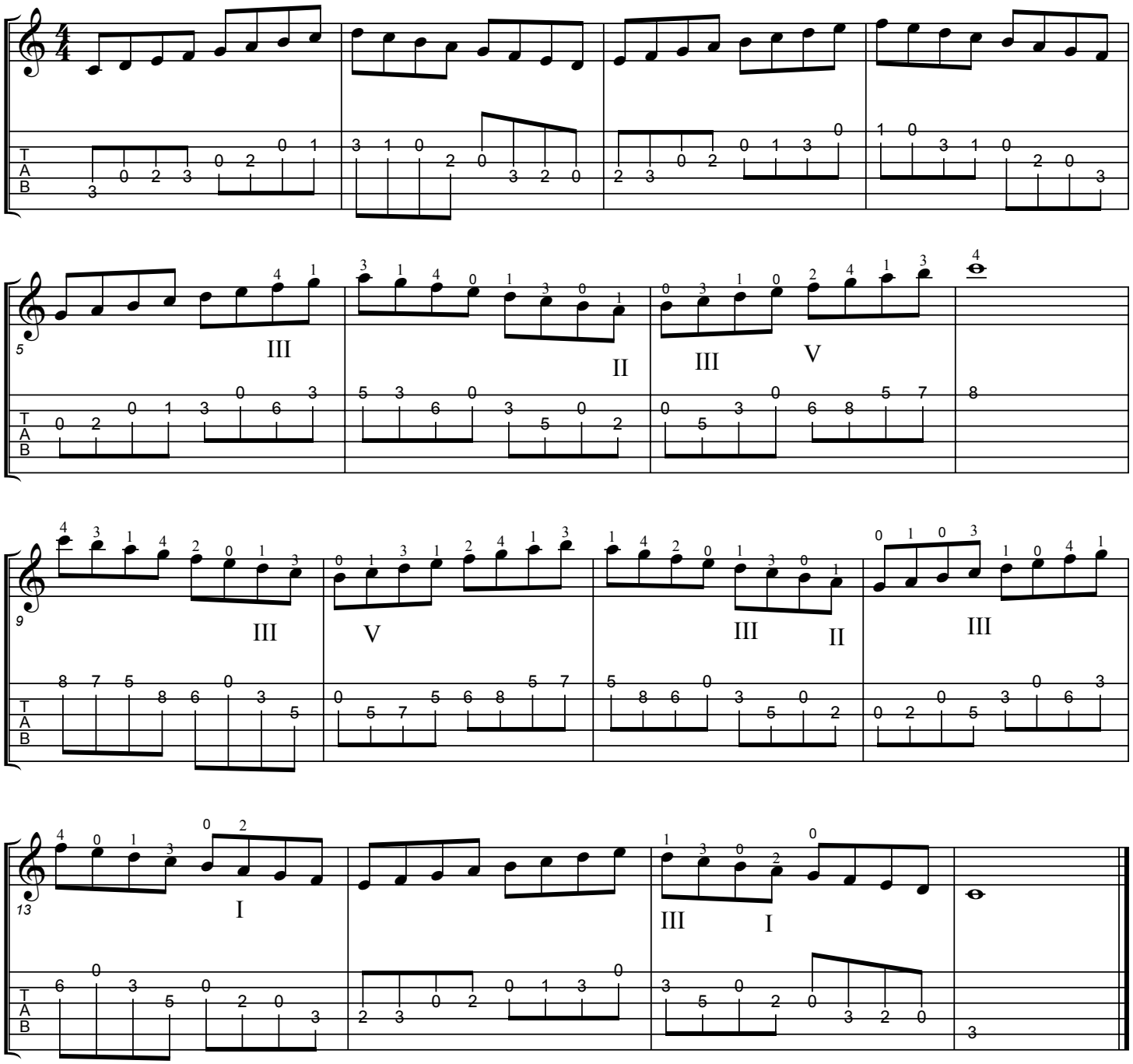

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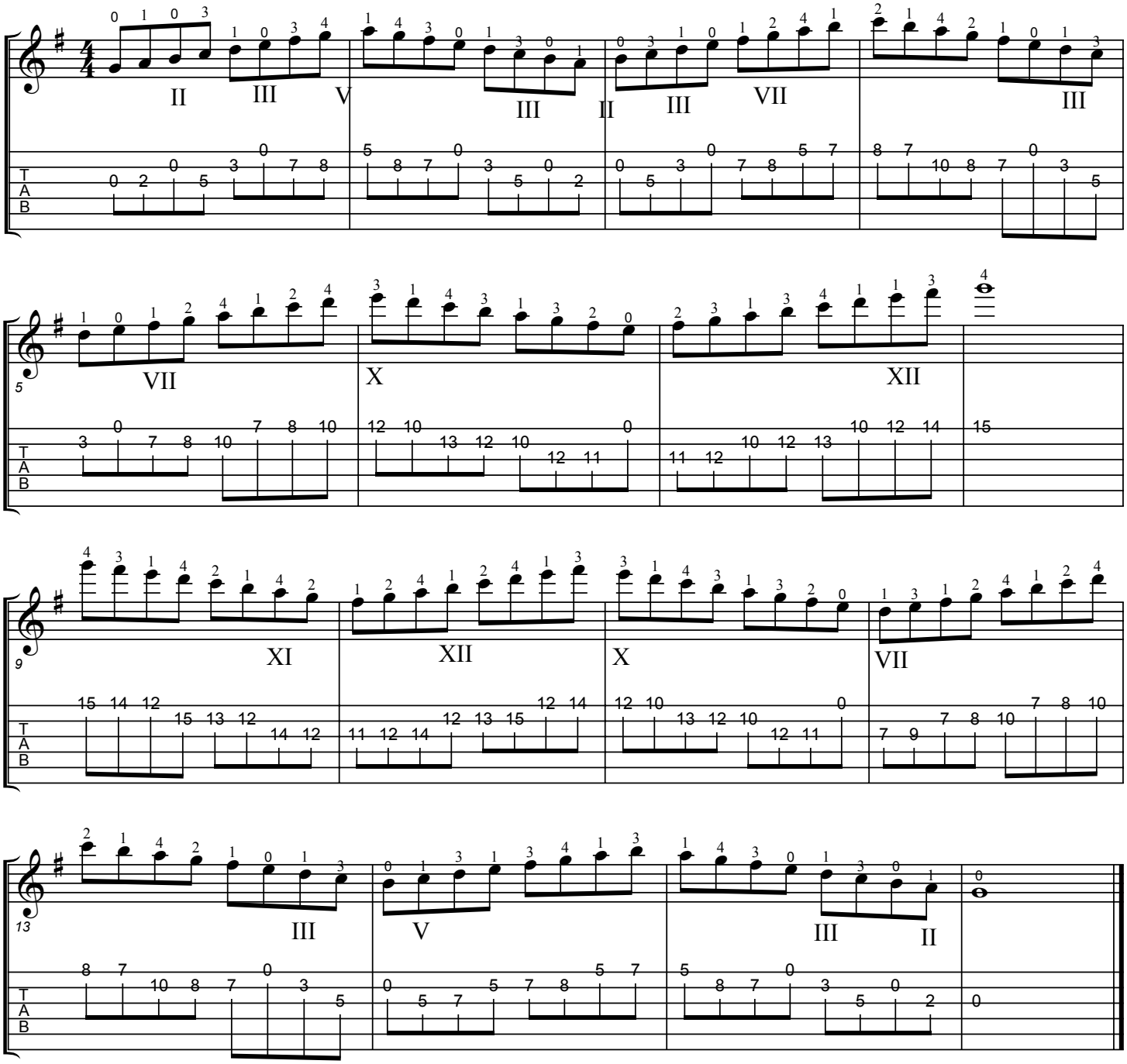

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Flatpick Profile: Al Smith

by Dan Miller

Over the years I've run into a lot of guitar and mandolin players who are big fans of the Dawg music of David Grisman and the subsequent Spacegrass music of Tony Rice. Usually the Grisman music, and the music that it spawned, is broadly labeled "new acoustic" music. The fans of this kind of music are many; however, the players who can actually perform the music are relatively few. It is tough stuff to play!

Al Smith, of Jasper, Georgia, is a guy who cannot only play the Grisman and Rice music; he can quote it chapter and verse. Al is a guy who loves to dive head first into anything that excites him, whether it is playing music, riding motorcycles, building and flying model radio controlled airplanes, building and repairing instruments, deer hunting, or restoring classic cars. He doesn't do anything half-heartedly. So, after he heard the David Grisman Quintet's original album in 1976 he did whatever it took to learn how to play those complex chords and the captivating lead lines that Tony Rice was playing over those chords.

Unless you are from Georgia, you may have not heard of Al because he likes to stay close to home and family. However, he is one of the Atlanta area's most successful acoustic musicians and has influenced, performed with, and/or taught many of the talented musicians who have come out of Atlanta over the past thirty years. Although Al knows how to fit comfortably into any traditional style bluegrass band or bluegrass jam, it is the "new acoustic" music that he loves best. I had a chance to visit with Al during a recent stay in Atlanta. He took me to the Saturday night jam at the famous Everett Music Barn in Suwannee, Georgia, and he had me over to dinner one night at his home in Jasper where he showed me a few of those Rice-style "off-chords" that he loves to use. He knows them all!

Al Smith grew up in Decatur, Georgia, and began learning how to play the guitar at age nine. He said, "I always loved watching the music that was played on the live TV shows when I was a kid. I remember watching Porter Wagoner, Flatt & Scruggs, Glen Campbell, and even Lawrence Welk." After he received his first guitar, Al's older brother—who was in a rock and roll band—started teaching him how to play basic chords. He recalls always loving instrumental music and gravitating towards learning tunes by bands like The Ventures.

Although Al and his brother were learning rock and roll, he remembers that when he was a kid his next door neighbors would hold bluegrass jam sessions at their home. Al remembers, "Our neighbors, two adult sisters and their mother, would pick at the house with the door open, or sometimes play out on the porch. We called them 'hillbillies' because they played bluegrass. Ha! Imagine that! We didn't really have an interest in bluegrass at the time, but we'd sit and listen to them play. They had expensive instruments, Martin guitars, and a Gibson mandolin!"

By the time Al had turned 15 his family had moved to Douglasville, Georgia, and he had joined a high school band that played rock and roll. However, inspired by Earl Scruggs and the movie *Deliverance*, he also bought a banjo and began learning how to play bluegrass. He said, "I was playing rock and roll on the guitar, but I also started taking bluegrass banjo pretty seriously."

By the time he turned 18, in 1975, Al was playing in a bluegrass band along with flatpicker John Farley, Mack Farley, and the Farley Brothers Band. For the first two years he did not attempt to learn how to play bluegrass on the guitar. He stuck to the banjo. However, by about 1977 he had heard Clarence White, Norman Blake and Dan Crary play the guitar and became interested in learning how to flatpick. Then he heard the David Grisman Quintet and his world changed.

Al recalls, "That original Grisman Quintet album was the most unique acoustic music that I had ever heard. It had a bluegrass rhythm feel, but a lot of the changes were of a jazz nature. I didn't try to figure any of it out for about a year after I first heard it because I didn't understand it. It was too harmonically complex. But after about a year I started to try. It was very difficult for me at the time. I knew about major and minor 7th chords, but I was not hip to a lot of the extensions and voicing that they were using." After discovering the first Mickey Baker book and becoming friends with Steve Stanley, a local picker with a jazz background, Al gradually started to learn more about what the Grisman group was doing. He said, "I loved the arranging and particularly the chord voicing of Tony Rice."

Al remembers, "Meeting Steve was great because he had an extensive jazz background and he wanted to learn fiddle tunes. We would meet about three days a week and show things to each other. Also, the Mickey Baker book was a big help. It opened my eyes to hipper voicing and taught me about voice leading. I realized that these were some of the voicings that Tony was playing. Coming from rock and roll I was used to playing bar chords, but the Mickey Baker book didn't focus on bar chords. I found out that the bar chords will choke

down the sound of an acoustic guitar. So I use them sparingly even today. That first Grisman recording changed my life and changed the way I viewed acoustic music." Al and Steve built up some repertoire and began performing as a duet.

Two other people who were very influential in Al's musical growth were Mark O'Connor and Randy Howard. Al met Randy Howard when he was 18 and Randy was 15 and they formed a close friendship that lasted until the day Randy passed away in 1999 at the age of 38, after a four-year battle with cancer. Al recalls, "I met Randy at a bluegrass festival and we were both interested in the same kind of music, bluegrass that stretched. He lived about three hours south of me, but we'd get together and play whenever we could to learn from each other…even over the phone!"

In about 1981 Mark O'Connor moved to Atlanta to play with Steve Morse and the Dixie Dregs. Al, Randy, and Mark would often get together to play, along with Jeff Pinkham (father of mandolin prodigy Josh Pinkham). Al said, "Playing with O'Connor was indescribable. I learned a lot just sitting across from him. He's a true monster, a lot of power, and total finesse combined, and so rhythmic." Al continues, "I met Jeff in a music store in Marietta. He had moved to Georgia after living in California where he had been Mike Marshall's roommate. Jeff knew Mark O'Connor from when Mark had lived in California and was playing with the Grisman Quintet." Randy Howard (fiddle), Jeff Pinkham (mandolin), Al Smith (guitar), Steve Standly (guitar) and Al's brother Randy Smith (on string bass) started performing together in and around Atlanta in 1982. Al said, "Jeff knew a lot of the Grisman repertoire and shared it with us. He played the mandolin a lot like Grisman. What a band! Wow!"

In 1983 Al, Randy Howard, and Randy Smith flew to Kansas to attend the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield and enter the contests there. Al placed third in the guitar contest that year (behind winner Robert Shafer and second place finisher Stephen Bennett). Randy Howard made the top five cut in the guitar contest, but did not place in the top three. Randy Howard later won the fiddle contest at Winfield three times and the mandolin contest once. Incidentally, today the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship limits the number of contestants to 40. However, in 1983 there was no limit and there were 57 contestants that year. That marked the highest number of contestants that they have ever had enter the contest in its 40-year history.

Al took home a Charles Hoffman cutaway guitar, and a trophy as his third place prize. He still owns that guitar. During the evening of the contest the finalists are asked to come up on stage and perform. Al brought up his friends Randy Howard, Mark O'Connor, and his brother Randy to pick with him. The Tony Rice Unit was performing on stage that night after Al and the other finalists performed. Al said, "I was on stage playing with Randy Howard, Mark O'Connor, and my brother Randy. I kicked off 'Swing 51' and looked up to see Tony Rice walking down the hill to go backstage. That was a little nerve racking. Plus, out of respect, I wouldn't have played one of Tony's tunes if I had known his band was following us, not to mention he would have played it much better!" Al also met Wyatt Rice for the first time at this event and has remained good friends to this day. In 1984 Al helped to start SEBA (Southeastern Bluegrass Assoc.) He was the founding Vice president.

By the mid-1980s Jeff Pinkham had moved to Texas (and eventually married fiddle great Benny Thomason's granddaughter, Terri) and Mark O'Connor had moved to Nashville. Around 1985 Al played on a recorded project of mandolinist Ricky Rorex, banjo player Mark Raborn and

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Randy Howard, Alison Krauss, and Al Smith perfroming in Atlanta

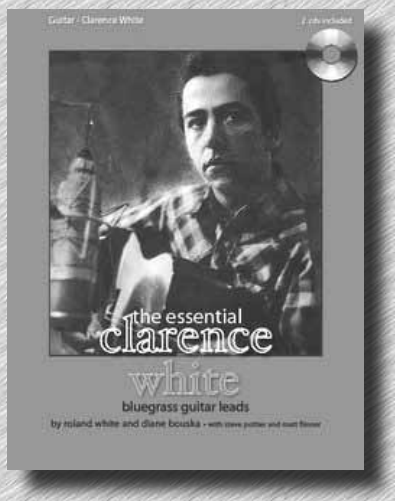
Randy Howard. It mainly consisted of new acoustic and fiddle tunes. In the late 80s Al formed the band called Acoustix (with a more traditional bluegrass sound) with Billy McKinnely on banjo, Bill Everett on mandolin, Ed Basham on bass, with Randy Howard occasionally sitting in on fiddle. In 1989 that band won the band competition at the bluegrass festival in Dahlonega, Georgia. In 1990 Al recorded his first solo project, *Seabreeze*, with Randy Howard on fiddle, Mark Nelson on bass, Jason Hoard on mandolin, Jeff Chastain on second guitar, and Billy McKinnely on banjo. Cindy Craven (sister of Grisman alum Joe Craven) sang on the record. This group also performed under the name Atlanta Acoustic String Ensemble. Al said, "Some of the finest times of my life were with these people."

In 1989 Al started working with luthier Jay Rhyne to learn how to build and repair musical instruments. After working with Jay for about a year, Al started a building and repair business that he calls Good Wood Guitars. Throughout the 1990s Al did the repair work for an Atlanta music store chain, Ken Stanton's Music, and for Atlanta Music Brokers. He became an authorized repairman for Martin, Gibson, Fender, Guild, Takamine, and Ovation. Al built his first guitar in 1992.

By 1994 Al had also started an entertainment company called Al Smith Entertainment and Productions. Through his production company he booked talent for corporate parties, weddings, and private events. Since Atlanta is a "convention town," Al stayed very busy booking his own bands, as well as other area musicians. When the Olympics came to Atlanta in the summer of 1996, Al's business was booming. He not only booked bands for private events during the Olympics, but the relationships with corporations who used his services during the Olympics remained fruitful for years afterwards.

Al states that an important influence in his life in terms of learning about the entertainment business was Ron Biesel, an older plectrum banjo/guitar player who had played on the Ed Sullivan Show, the Johnny Carson's Tonight Show, and the Merv Griffin Show as an audience warm-up act. Al said, "Ron and I ended up playing hundreds of gigs together. We played together in a Dixieland band, but we also had a duo act. We played at weddings and parties and on the riverboat at Stone Mountain Park. He really taught me the ropes when it came to the business side of the entertainment industry. We played together from 1991 until he passed away in 1998."

While his long-time friend Randy Howard was battling cancer, Al put together a benefit show and invited Alison Krauss and Vassar Clements to perform. Al had met Alison back in about 1983 when he and Randy were traveling the contest circuit. Al said, "I wanted this to be a special event for Randy. I invited people who he had grown up playing music with and who had become a part of his life. He thought he was coming to Atlanta to play a reunion gig with the Atlanta Acoustic String Ensemble. It was



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a surprise and the venue was packed. After he arrived we began to call all of his old friends up on stage to perform with him. He stayed on stage for four hours that night. The grand finale was featuring Alison, Randy, and Vassar playing triple fiddles."

In 2000, Mike Smith, a local Atlanta guitar and mandolin player, called Al for guitar lessons. Al wasn't giving lesson at the time, but Al and Mike did meet up at one of the weekly jam sessions at the Red Light Café in Atlanta. Mike informed Al that he was forming an acoustic group called the Dappled Grays and wanted to know if Al would be willing to produce their first recording. Al said, "The band came over to my house and played for me out in the backyard. Their music was original and in the vein of new acoustic music. I made a few suggestions about how they might tweak their arrangements."

Al went into CMO studios in Atlanta with Mike Smith (mandolin), Casey Cook (guitar), Mike Thornburgh (fiddle), Jeremy Bowman (bass), and Andy Martin (banjo) and recorded the tracks. The tracks were taken to Nashville and co-mixed by Al and Nashville engineer and producer Bill Vorndik. The CD, *In the Gait*, was released to rave reviews in 2001 (you can see the article in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* about Casey Cook and the Dappled Grays in our May/June 2001 issue). The same year that CD was released Al was inducted into the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame, an organization that was founded by Fiddlin' John Caron's grandson.

Over the years, as the Grisman group—or any of its original members—released albums, Al would buy them and work on learning every tune. When asked about how a bluegrass player might start learning how to dive into the world of new acoustic music, Al said, "The first thing is to be open minded and have the desire to want to stretch, with no boundaries. Then focus on rhythm skills by increasing your chord vocabulary and modify your rhythmic feel. Rhythm is the primary role of the acoustic guitar in "our" music. Our role is to drive the band. I can't emphasize that enough. If you are only going to be good at one thing on the acoustic guitar, it should be rhythm. That is what you are going to be playing most of the time—like it or not. When you think about it, rhythm and timing is what it's all about on all instruments. It's the groove! As my dad would say, 'It's what makes you pat your foot!'"

Al continues by saying that it is always important to work to improve your skill level with the rudiments like music theory, reading music, staying in tune, learning scale positions all over the neck in all keys and developing your ear. He also feels like you should learn at least three chord voicing for every chord you know. Beyond that, he recommends that you start to learn how to improvise over II-V progressions. He said, "Learn how to hear and identify tonal centers and become familiar with scale tones and mode choices. If I'm in the key of G minor, I know that a likely choice is the Bb major scale. However, I can also think two frets below and play in that major key. For instance, in Gm I can think about playing out of F major. Or I can also play out of the minor pentatonic scale. There are a lot of other choices, just keep experimenting. It all depends on how you want to sound at any given moment in your improvisation."

Another important aspect of learning how to play new acoustic music that Al emphasizes is "line development" or phrasing. He said, "This is a skill that is developed by listening to a lot of different players for a number of years. Listening can teach you how to intertwine scale positions to create interesting phrases." Al adds, "Don't just listen to guitar players. Listen to sax, piano, vocalist and anything with interesting phrasing. Transcribing will help you learn to listen deep into the music, and focus on intervals and their relationship to chords. I've transcribed entire albums and learned tremendously from it."

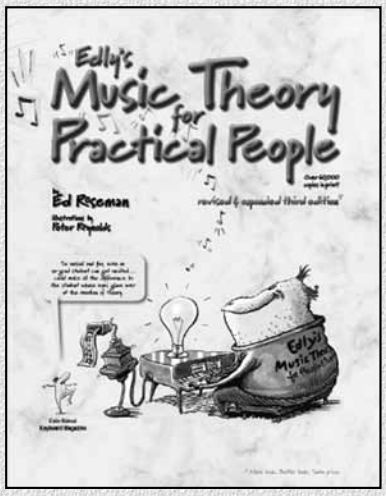
Listening is a skill that Al says starts with learning how to tune. He said, "Tuning correctly is one of the hardest parts of learning to play!" He is not a fan of electronic tuners. He said, "If you are watching the lights on the tuners, you are not listening. Tuning needs to be an audible skill, not visual. If you rely on electronic tuners, you will never learn how to hear it". Since the guitar has an "equal tempered scale," it can be in tune when you play some chords, or when all of the strings are tuned open, but then be out of tune when you play other chords. Some guitars naturally stay in tune better than others, even when they're of the same scale length. Al suggests that you tune your guitar for each song depending on the key and related chords. He said, "If you learn how to tune your guitar to the key and to the situation, you will develop your ear and learn to hear it, and your guitar will just simply sound better."

Al Smith is a guy who has spent a lot of time developing his skill in the realm of new acoustic music. He is currently working on an instructional video that will allow guitar players to make the transition from playing bluegrass to performing new acoustic, and swing style music. Also, his latest recording project is with new acoustic banjo player Mark Raborn, of Louisiana. This is an all-original tune project to be released in early 2012.This album also features Brian McDowell on mandolin, Tim Passmore on fiddle, Keith Morris, and Tommy Sauter on upright bass.

Finally, Al wanted to add, "Without the support and understanding of my family, I could not have continued to remain playing this intensely for all these years. It is to them I am grateful. Especially Nancy, she was meant to be a musician's wife."

Although Al owns a number of different guitars, the one he uses most often is his 1952 Martin D-28. He likes Elixir Strings, "shell type" picks, and Elliott Capos. For this issue Al has provided us with a recording and transcription of his arrangement of the tune "Take This Hammer." He said, "It's in the key of E major (no capo) a little unusual for flatpicking styles. Think bluesy."

Music Theory For Practical People



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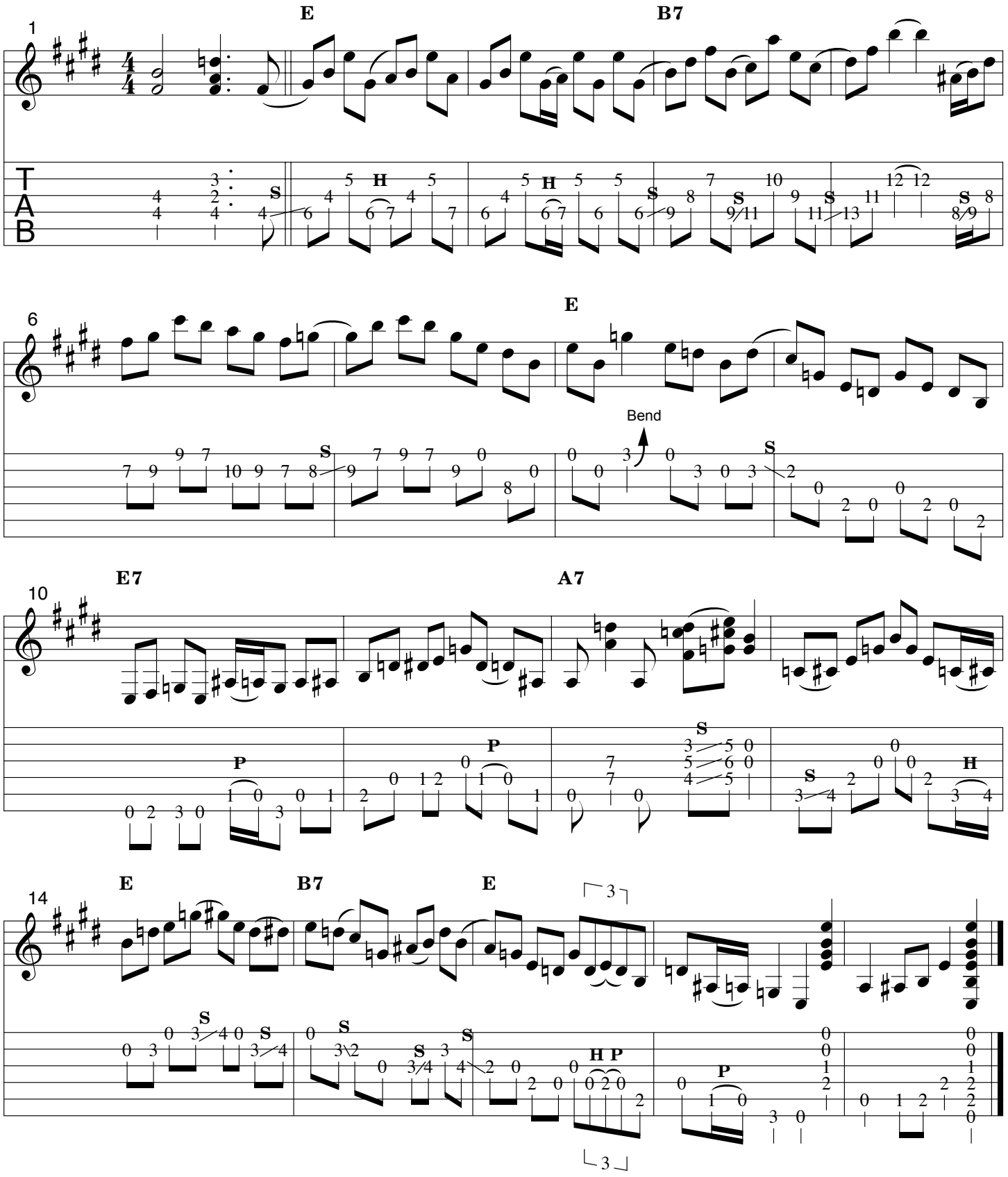
Track 17-18

Take This Hammer

Arranged by Al Smith

Hammer & Pull "Red Haired Boy"

by Kathy Barwick

For this issue, I'd like to focus on two popular flatpicking techniques; hammer-ons and pull-offs. Besides sounding cool, these techniques can serve to give some relief to your right hand.

I've provided several exercises to help you hone your hammer-on/pull-off techniques. First, play these picking every note. Then use the hammer/pull techniques as indicated, and make sure they sound the same as when you picked every note.

When hammering on, make sure that you hammer the note. Your finger should come down on the hammered note from some distance, very quickly. Your finger should strike the string as a hammer would.

Pull-offs are tricky in another way. If you simply lift your finger off the string you will get some sound, but not the right sound. To get the right sound you must pluck the string with your finger. I use the callus on the end of my finger to catch the string. When pulling to an open string, pluck down (toward the floor); try to avoid running into the next-lower string.

Two things to watch out for:

1. Sometimes people want to hammer-on or pull-off faster than the music dictates. Be sure, in the exercises, and the tune, to allow each note its full time value. Don't rush it.
2. You might want to rush into the hammer-on in order to make sure there's still some energy in the string before you hammer it. Don't. If done correctly, your hammering action will provide the energy. In fact, you should practice hammering without picking the note. See how loud you can make it just with your left hand.

I've used the popular tune "Red Haired Boy" to feature these techniques. It's overdone, to be sure, but there are still some places where I could have hammered or pulled to the note. (There are also some weak notes that would have been better off picked... they are generally C notes on the 2nd string, where you have to hammer really hard to overcome the tension at the nut.) Have fun especially with measures 4 and 14; make each note perfect. I recommend using your middle and ring fingers for those two hammer-ons. And on that subject, your middle finger is the strongest; use that for hammering when the arrangement allows for it.

Play this arrangement slowly, and concentrate on your left-hand techniques. Try to make your hammered and pulled-off notes sound as if you had picked them. A final note; when you let your left hand do some of the work of producing notes, this can help with speed as well.

Kathy Barwick has played guitar since the late 1960s, when she learned folk-style fingerpicking. Kathy also plays banjo resophonic guitar and acoustic bass, and has performed over the years with bluegrass and Irish bands. A founding member of The All Girl Boys, Kathy now plays resophonic guitar and mandolin with The Mike Justis Band. Kathy's critically-acclaimed solo recording In My Life was released in early 2011. A Sacramento resident, Kathy teaches at music camps and gives private lessons on guitar, resophonic guitar, and banjo. She welcomes your feedback and/or comments; you can contact her at kbarguitar@yahoo.com or visit on the web (www.kathybarwick.net).

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Hammer and Pull Exercises

Arranged by Kathy Barwick

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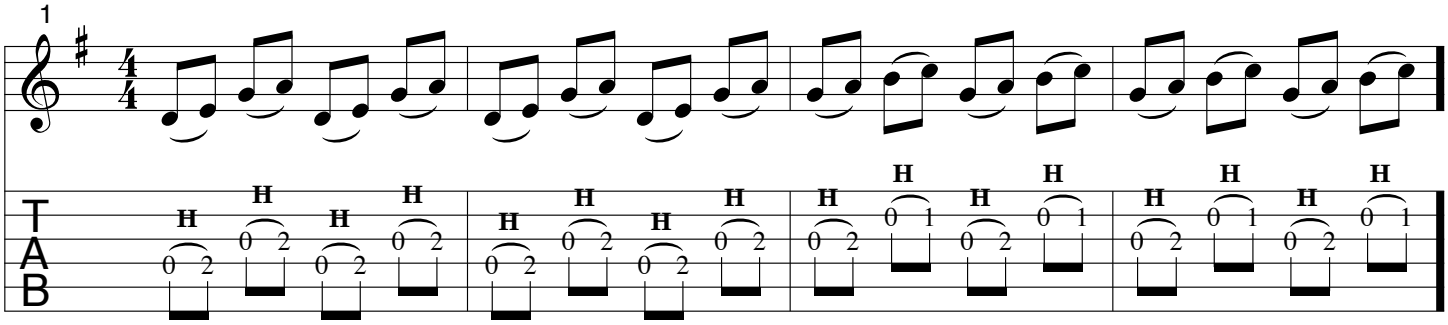
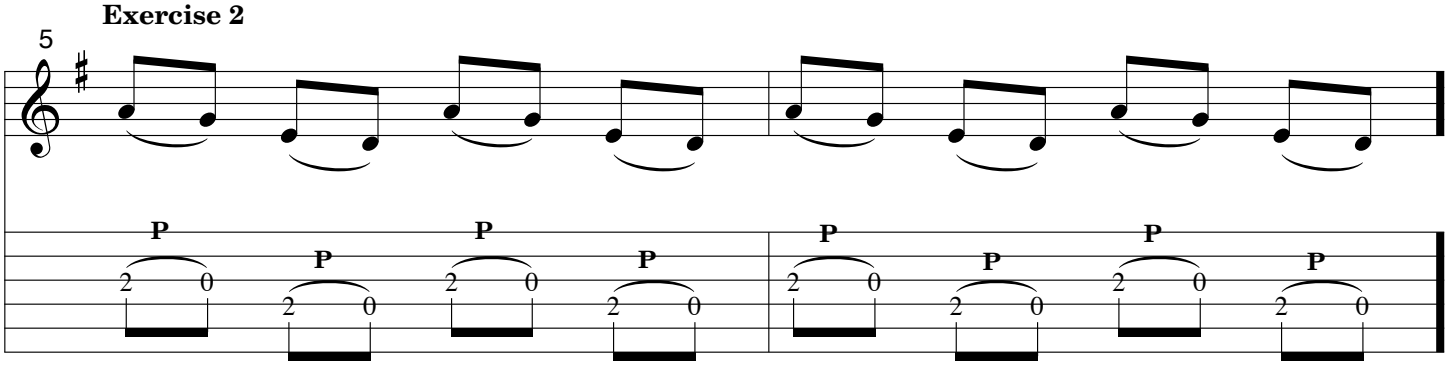
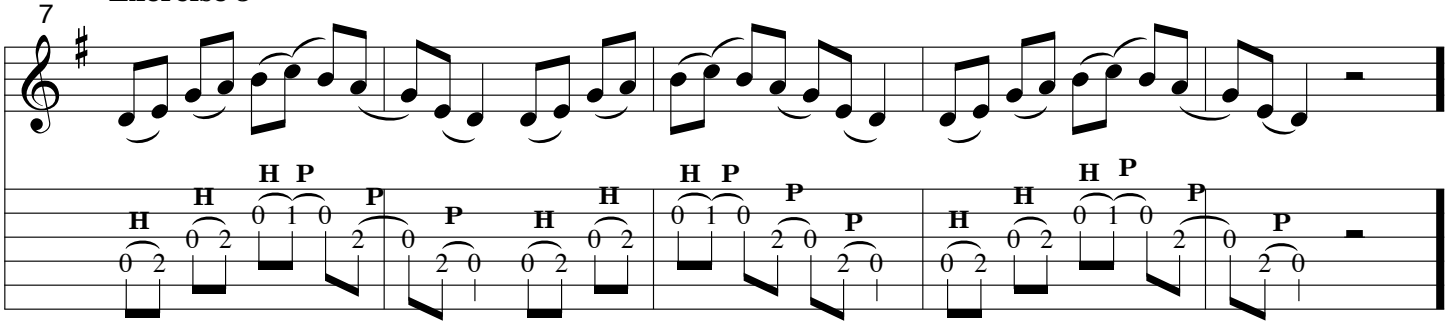


Exercise 2



Exercise 3



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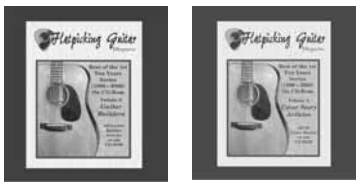

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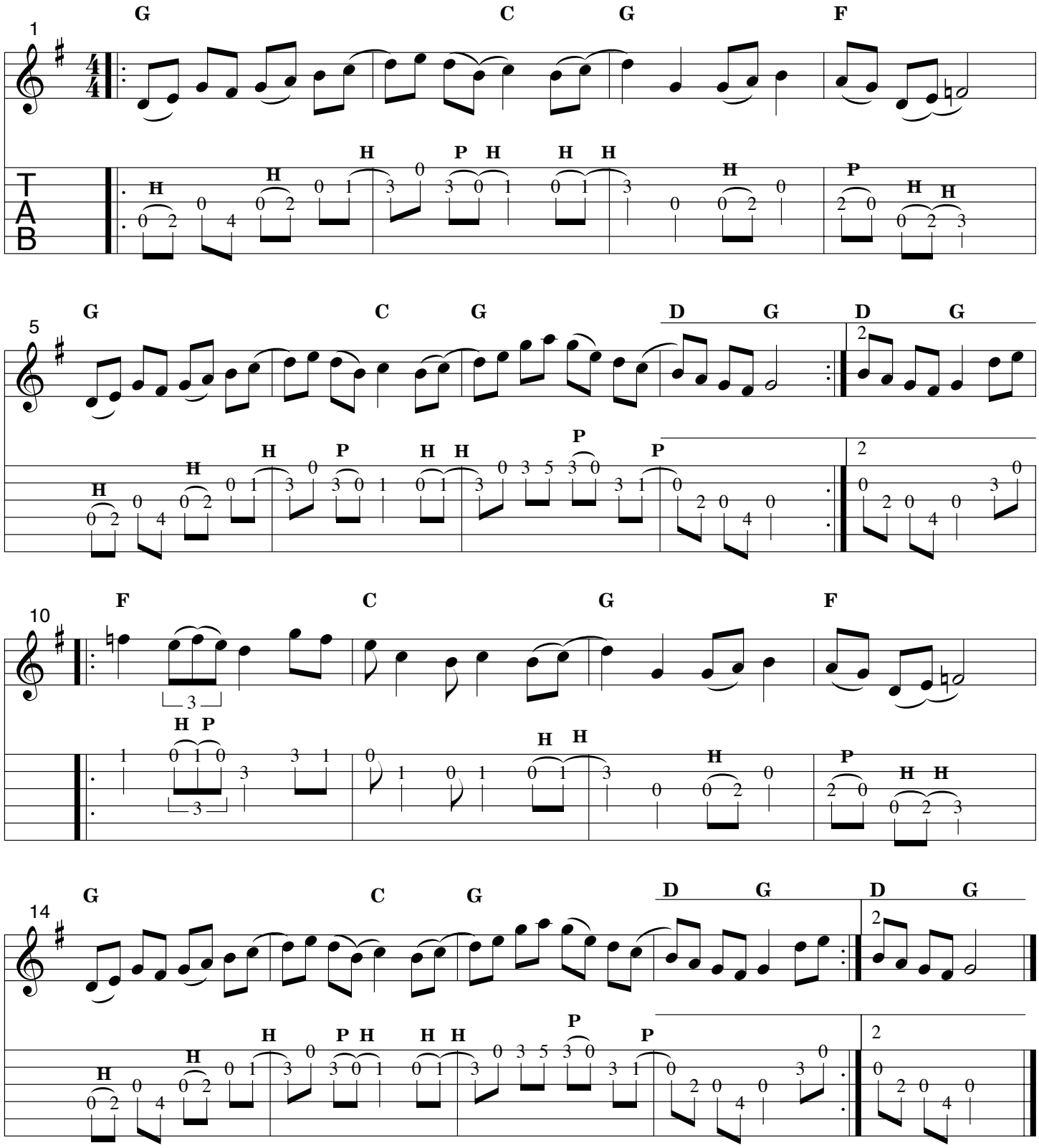
Red Haired Boy

Arranged by Kathy Barwick

THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

The Year of Jubilo

This Civil War tune (also known as "Kingdom Coming") was written by Henry Work. It has lyrics but is mostly played as an instrumental. It was used in the soundtrack for Ken Burns' *Civil War* series and has been a particular favorite among old-time banjo players. I play it out of a C position capoed at the second fret. This arrangement takes us twice through both halves, with the first iteration being more basic and the second more nuanced, with some grace notes and crosspicking. Note that here are strums throughout (indicated with arrows in the tab) and that they fall into one of two types: those in C and F all go *down-up-down*, while those in G pause during that first eighth-note down beat and are all played *up-down*. Also keep in mind that the group of notes which appears in measure 7 (and again in 15 and 23) is not a strum but a single large picked note; play it like you would a double-stop. The melody is infectious; it will get you. (And if you happen to be one of the nine people who doesn't order the CD that accompanies each FGM, it is always a good idea to look up the tune online to familiarize yourself with how it sounds.) Enjoy.

Orrin Star is an award-winning guitar, banjo & mandolin player based in the Washington, DC area. The 1976 National Flatpicking Champion, he has toured and recorded widely, is the author of Hot Licks for Bluegrass Guitar, and performs mostly solo and duo. He offers private music instruction both in person and online (see www.orrinstar.com).

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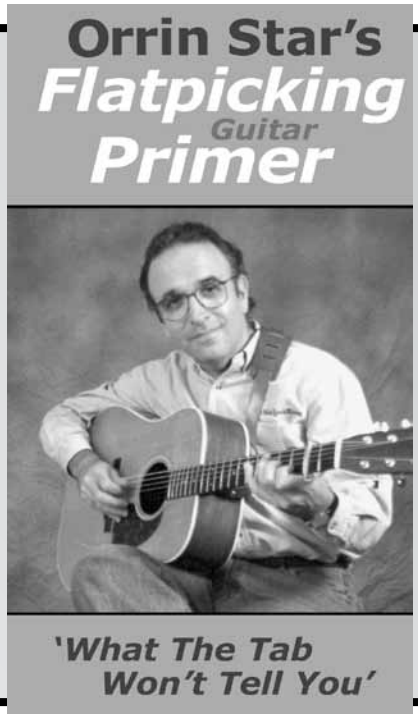
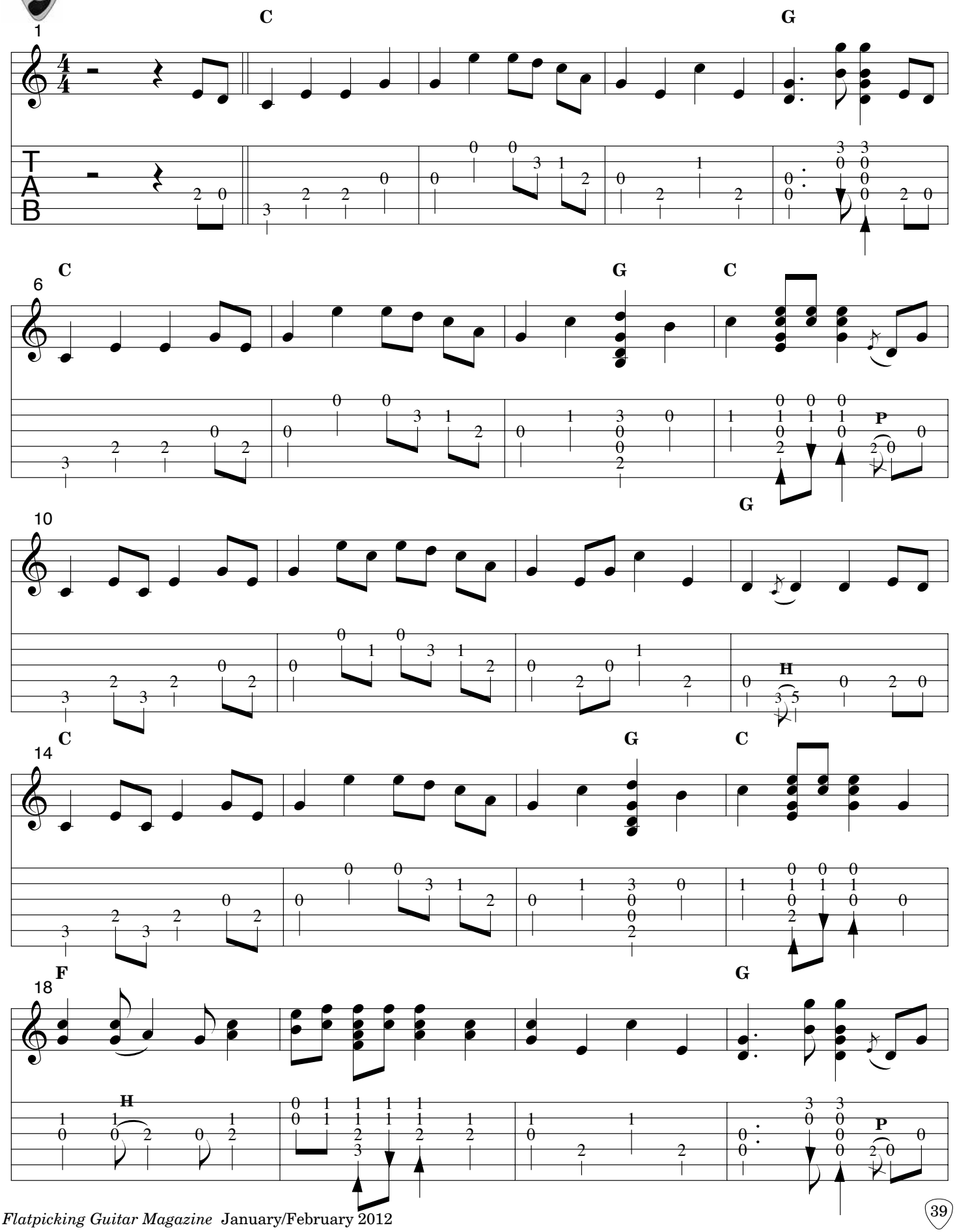


Audio CD
Tracks 21-22

The Year of Jubilo

Arranged by Orrin Star

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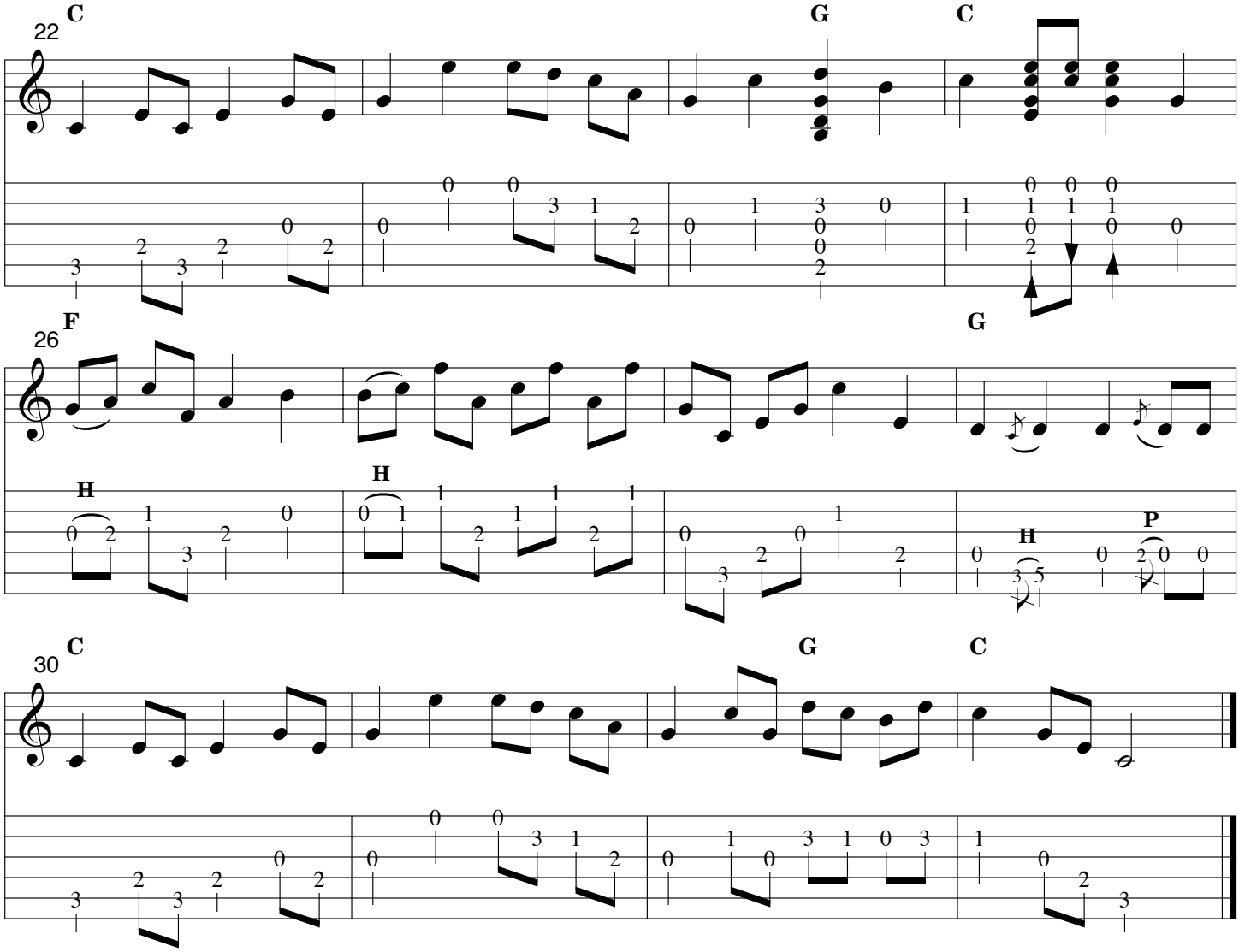
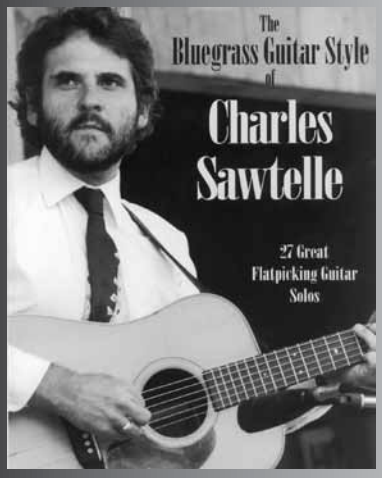

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"Darling Cory" Two Solos

by Dix Bruce

(Editor's Note: Part II of Dix's Nashville Number System article can be found on page 63,)

When I begin learning a new song I tend to follow a set routine. The first thing I do is learn the chord progression. After the chord progression I look at the melody and try to memorize it. Once I've played and/or sung through the song a few times, I usually try to come up with a solo based closely on the melody. After all, the melody is the song! If you don't know the melody, you don't know the song.

I have to admit that it took me years to really understand this. In my younger days I just wanted to pick! Tony Rice was based out of the San Francisco Bay Area from the late 1970s up until the early 1980s. I'd see him play with the David Grisman Quintet and he'd be flying all over the fingerboard. It looked easy. I want to do that! I wanted to play those hot licks and be the envy of millions!

What I didn't understand was that Tony, as well as Doc Watson, Dan Crary, Clarence White, and every other great soloist in any kind of music I'd listen to, was basing the improvisation on something. It wasn't just about licks and didn't have to be an exact representation of the melody, it could be an impression defined by the individual artist. I'm sure licks were involved and added in as basic vocabulary, but they weren't the whole story. Okay, 30 years later, lesson learned. But enough about Tony and more about me!

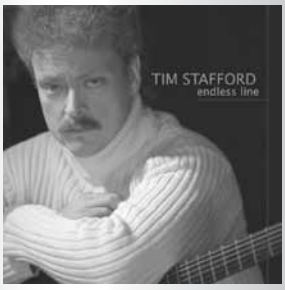
So, in approaching this theoretical new song I'll learn the chords, the melody, and eventually compose a solo based on the melody. I'll usually play this solo for a while until I really have it perfected. This is not to say that I wouldn't change it on a whim during a performance. Something might just pop into my head, some other way of playing what I had planned to play, and if that were the case I would improvise. I find that the more I perform a particular solo, the more liberties I tend to take with it. Eventually I'll get to a point where it seems that I have diverged enough for my original concept to compose the second solo.

When this happens I try to call upon my sense of discipline and actually sit down and work up a second solo that's distinct from the first solo. I mention "discipline" because if I don't make myself sit down and do the work, the ideas usually just flutter away, and I never end up actually working out that second solo. It's like the fish that got away. "Man, I had the greatest idea for this solo…"

As I've mentioned in this column numerous times, I keep several spiral-bound music notebooks and a pencil close by. As I compose a solo, I write out in the notebook. In my experience, if I don't go through that exercise, if I either don't write it down or don't write it down in a bound book, the solo or the composition never gets finished or gets lost. Loose sheets of paper on my desk are like leaves in the wind. If I write a song or a solo in the notebook it exists in a set location and I can refer back to it, correct it, change it, and learn it in the future. My notebooks end up being kind of like a musical diary and I can refer back to them and see what I was doing at a particular point in time.

Nearly all of the books I've published have come directly from these notebooks. So, a word to the wise: try to write your stuff out in a music notebook. Don't get hung up if you're not comfortable writing music. It can be written in music notation, tablature, or any kind of music shorthand you come up with just as long as it sets down in black and white what your ideas are so that you can come back to them at a future date and understand what you actually meant to write. The first piece is always more difficult to write out than the second one. The second piece is easier than the first piece but not as easy as the third piece. Keep at it and it will get easier.

Lately I've been working on that great old song "Darling Cory." It comes out of the old time or folk tradition, at least as far as I know, and it has some dark themes and violent characters. It's not about churchgoing folk but it's a great look at a certain segment of the population.



Tim Stafford
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As I played through the melody to "Darling Cory" in the key of C, I noticed that it has a Bb note in it (as with "Dig a hole, dig a hole, in the MEADOW"). The B-flat note is kind of unusual relative to the rest of the notes and it gives the melody its unique character. So of course, I want my solo to have that Bb in it.

Since "Darling Cory" is pitched here in the key of C I decided I also wanted to include an Eb to E natural move, one that's easy to do on the guitar going from the second string, fourth fret, Eb to the first string, open E natural. (C is the key a typical male voice would sing the song in. The keys of F or G would probably accommodate most female voices.) I combined the Bb note, the Eb to E natural move with the rest of the melody to make a solo. See the first solo at the top of page 44.

After I played through the solo a few times, as I mentioned above, I started changing little things. Eventually I decided to write out a second solo based on the first solo. The first solo is based on the melody or my impression of it, and the second solo is based on the first solo. In the second solo I doubled up on the Eb to E natural combination, added more connecting riffs, then changed a few melodic passages, if only slightly. The second solo is written out right after the first on page 44.

If I play "Darling Cory" enough I'll probably start hearing the third solo. For the third solo I might go completely away from the melody. That would probably be okay at this point because I sort of paid my melody dues with the first and second solos. Of course, there are an infinite number of ways to go for a third solo. I might begin a new solo an octave higher or lower from where I started the original solo. I might turn the shape of the melody around. When the melody ascends my solo might descend and vice versa.

"Darling Cory" is from my book/2CDs set *The Parking Lot Picker's Songbook, Guitar Edition*. It's always good to have more than one solo on any song. Start with the first one based on the melody of the song. From that point on, you can take the song and your solos just about anywhere you want.

Dix's latest publication is Christmas Crosspicking Solos for Guitar. The book/CD set features 31 arrangements of the most popular and best loved traditional Christmas songs for cross picking guitar. It includes chords, melodies, tablature, lyrics, and extensive instruction on the crosspicking style. This is Dix's second collection of holiday music solos. The first is Christmas Favorites for Solo Guitar, a collection of Carter style solos on traditional Christmas and holiday tunes. Both are available from Dix's website (http://musixnow.com). If you start working on the solos now they'll be ready in plenty of time for the next holiday season! Mel Bay recently published Dix's book/2CDs set The Parking Lot Picker's Songbook, Bass Edition, the sixth book in the Parking Lot Picker's series. It includes bass lines to each of the over 200 songs along with extensive instruction on how to compose bass lines from a song's chord progression.

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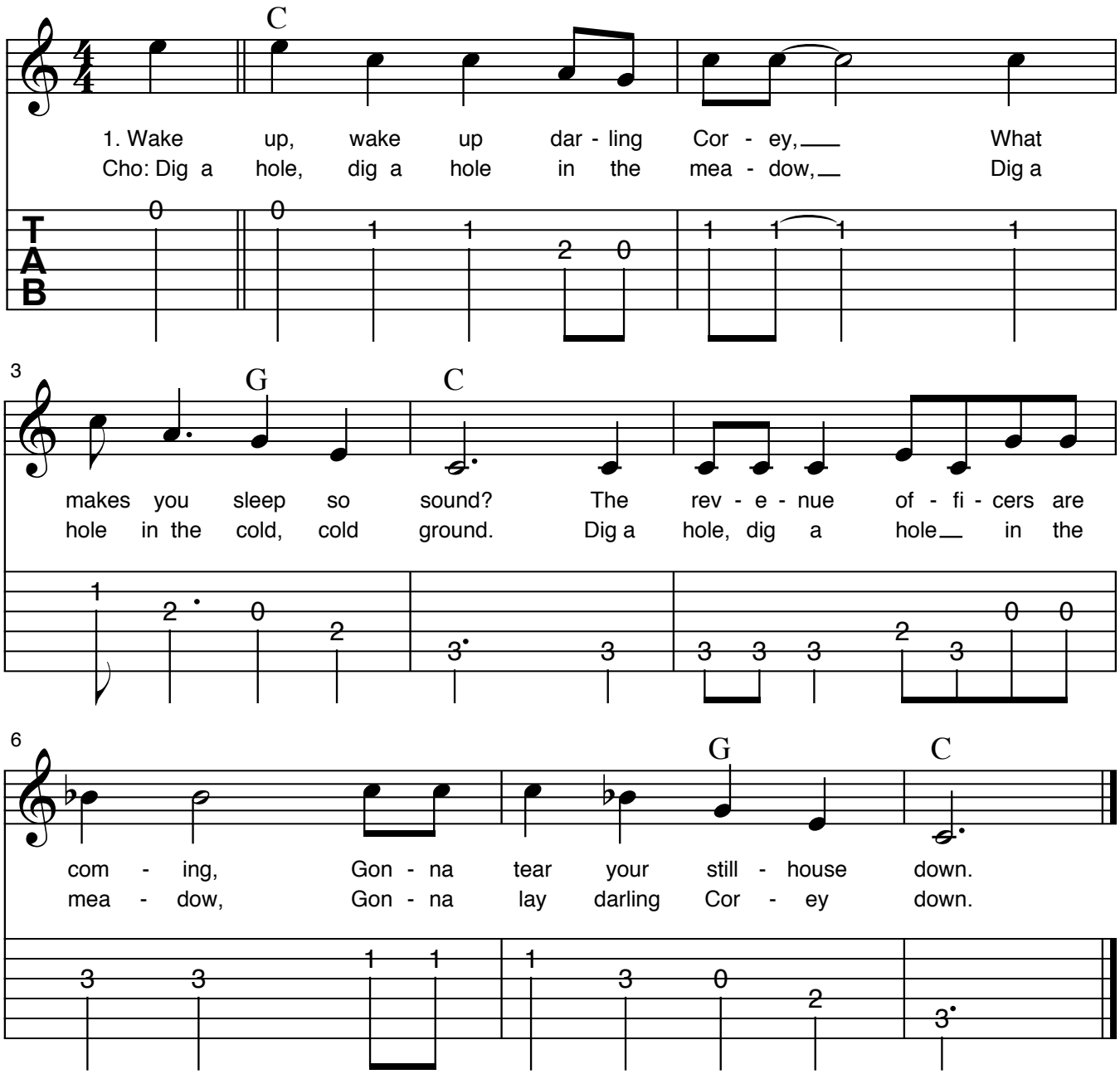
Darling Cory
Melody

Arranged by Dix Bruce


C
1. Wake up, wake up dar - ling Cor - ey, What
Cho: Dig a hole, dig a hole in the mea - dow, Dig a
T
A
B
3
G
C
makes you sleep so sound? The rev - e - nue of - fi - cers are
hole in the cold, cold ground. Dig a hole, dig a hole in the
6
G
C
com - ing, Gon - na tear your still - house down.
mea - dow, Gon - na lay darling Cor - ey down.

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3. Well, the first time I saw darling Corey,
She was sittin' on the banks of the sea,
Had a forty-four around her,
And a banjo on her knee.

4. Go away, go away darling Corey,
Quit hanging around my bed.
Bad liquor has ruined my body,
Pretty women gone to my head.

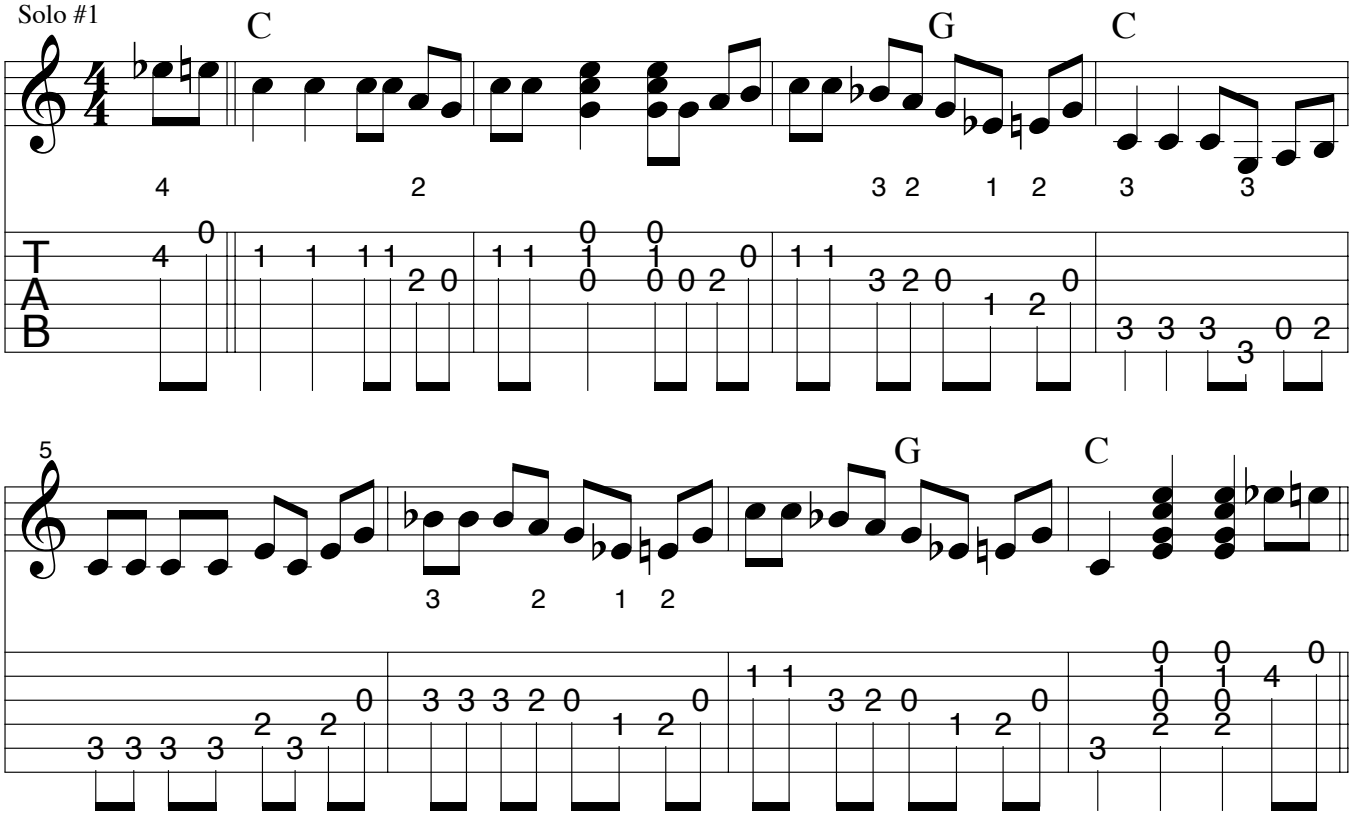
5. Can't you hear those bluebirds a'singing?
Don't you hear that mournful sound?
They're preaching darling Corey's funeral,
In some lonesome graveyard ground.

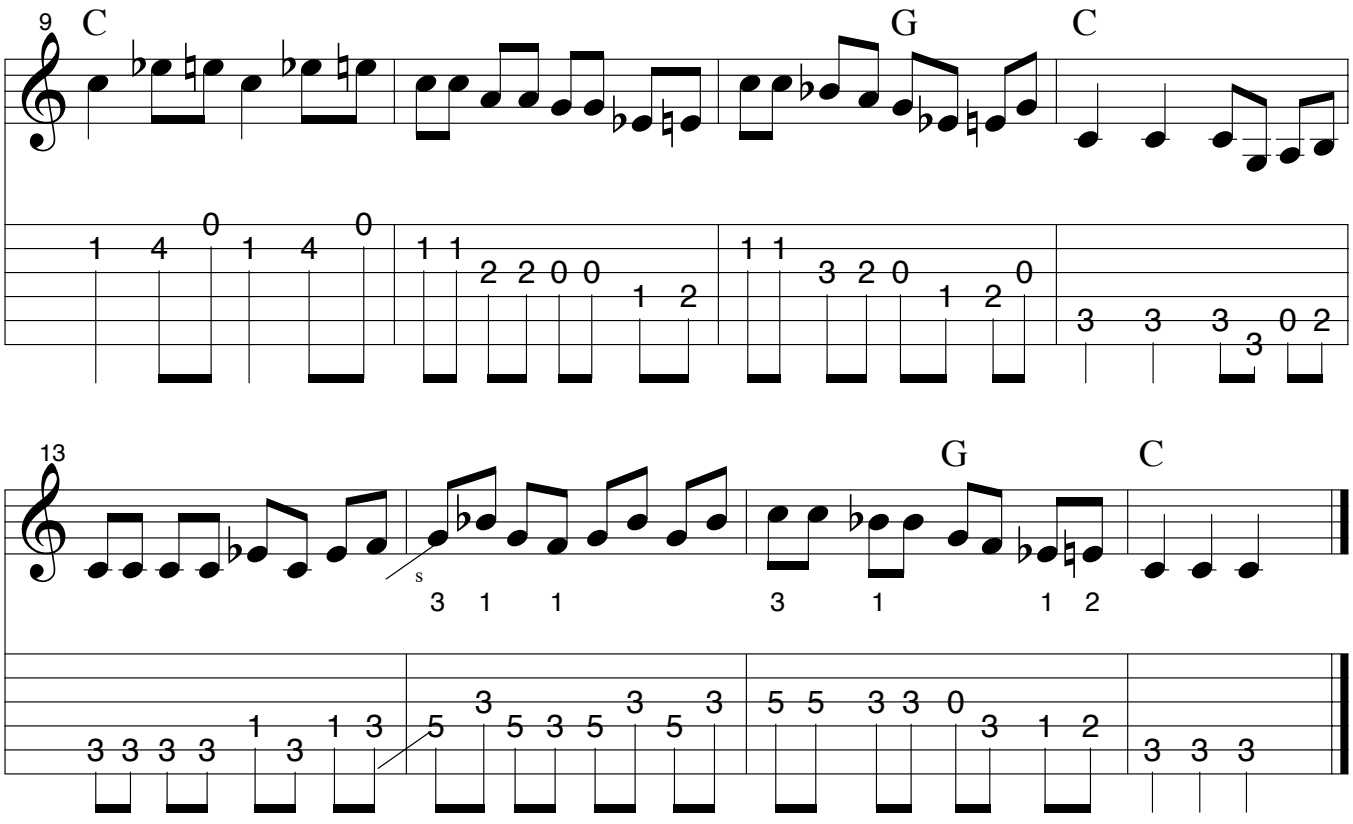
6. Wake up, wake up darling Corey,
Go and get my gun,
I ain't no man for trouble,
But I'll die before I'll run.

Audio CD
Tracks 24-25

Darling Cory
Solos

Arranged by Dix Bruce

Solo #1

Solo #2



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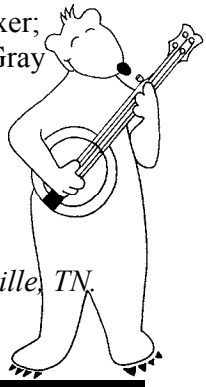
Old Time and Traditional Week - June 10-16: Flatpicking: Rolly Brown, Mark Cosgrove, Dan Crary, Steve Kaufman, Chris Newman, Eric Thompson; **Fingerpicking**: Pat Kirtley, Harvey Reid, Richard Smith; **Bass**: Rusty Holloway; **Old Time Fiddle**: Brad Leftwich, Suze Thompson; **Mountain Dulcimer**: Joe Collins; **Old Time Banjo:** Evie Ladin; **Songwriting:** Steve Spurgin; **Celtic Harp:** Máire Ní Chathasaigh

Bluegrass Week - June 17-23: Flatpicking: John Carlini, Beppe Gambetta, Adam Granger, Andy Hatfield, Jeff Jenkins, Chris Jones, Wayne Taylor; **Mandolin**: Bruce Graybill, Emory Lester, John Moore, Don Rigsy, Roland White, Radim Zenkl; **Bluegrass Banjo**: Gary Davis, Murphy Henry, Alan Munde, Jeff Scroggins; **Dobro ™:** Ivan Rosenberg, Mike Witcher**; Bass:** Rusty Holloway, Missy Raines; **Bluegrass Fiddle**: Dennis Caplinger, Bobby Hicks; **Singing Class**: Sally Jones; **Kid's Kamp:** Marcy Marxer; **Jam Instructors Both Weeks**: Keith Yoder, Tony Anthonisen; **101 Instructor:** Cindy Gray



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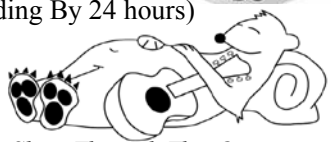

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Music Theory:
Mastering the Fingerboard
Technical Studies for Flatpickers

by Michel A. Maddux

In a Minor Mode

Today I wanted a chance to hit that low E string and use it as a drone. I like the sound that my D-28 gets when the drone is ringing and I can play off it.

A drone string is one that continues to ring out while you play the other strings. I use the bottom string as a drone when I am playing out of the Drop D tuning, but it can also be used with a standard tuning when I play in E Minor.

Exercises in E Minor

Play through the exercises to get comfortable in E and B Minor. Notice that these keys are the relative minors to G and D Major. That means that they have the same key signature as G and D Major, one sharp in G, the F#, and two sharps in D, the F# and the C#.

In practical terms this also means that you can play the G major scale form against the E minor, except instead of starting on the G note, you begin on the E note. The same thing is true for D Major/B minor, and in fact is true for all of the relative major/minor keys. That is also why you can sometimes substitute the relative minor chord for the major, for example, a common substitution is to use an A minor instead of a C Major.

About the Tune: "Motif West"

This is a tune that I made up to get a chance to improvise over the E Minor form. After the intro the tune is a regular AABB form. The only thing a bit unusual is the extra two measures in the B section.

Keep the drone string, the low E string, ringing in the A section. Let me know how you are doing with this one.

Have fun, and keep on pickin'!

Mike's guitar music can be heard regularly in the Rocky Mountain West. Contact information on recordings, books, and correspondence can be found at http://www.madduxband.com. You can also search Facebook and YouTube for the latest clips and news.

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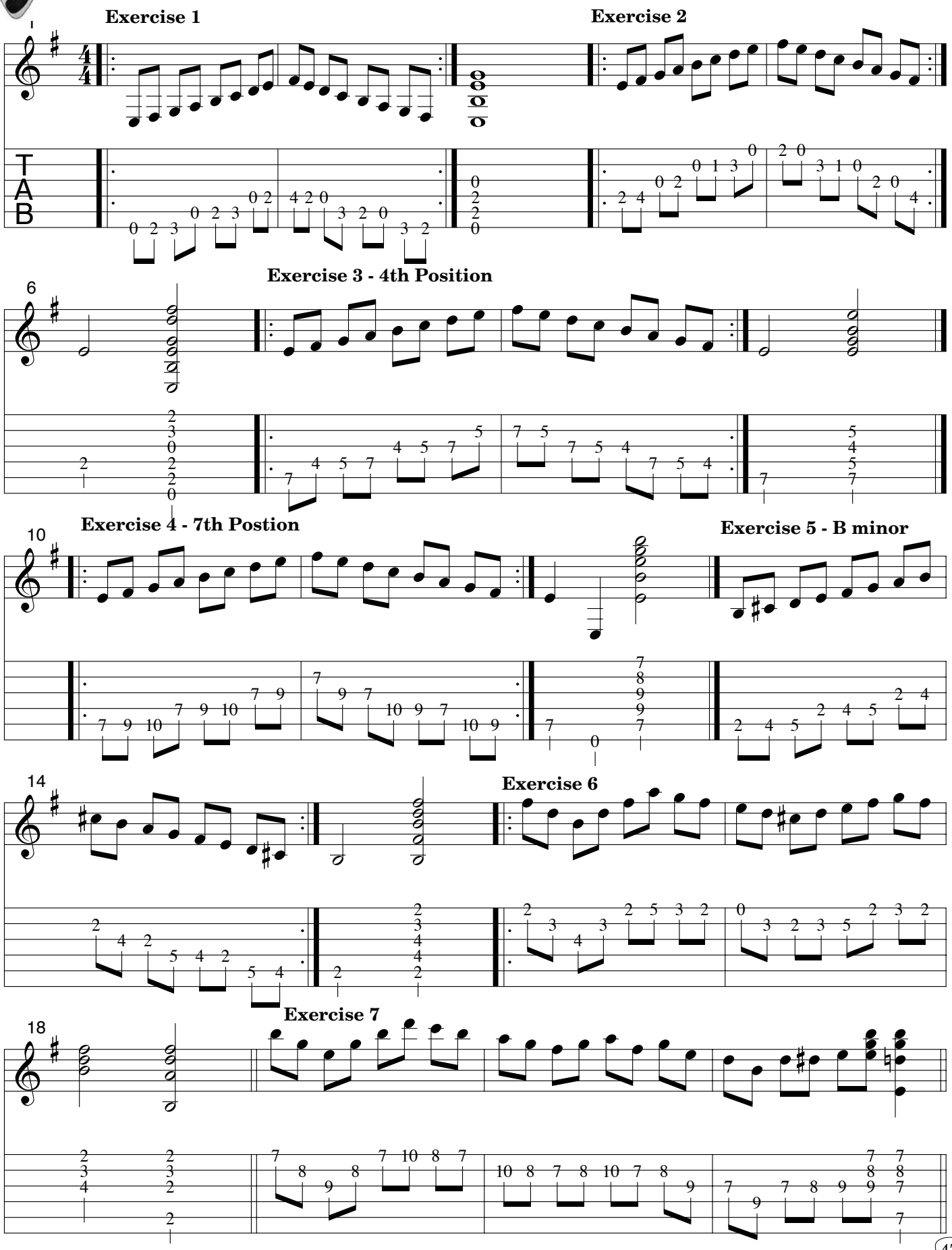
Maddux Exercises

Arranged by Mike Maddux

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Motif West

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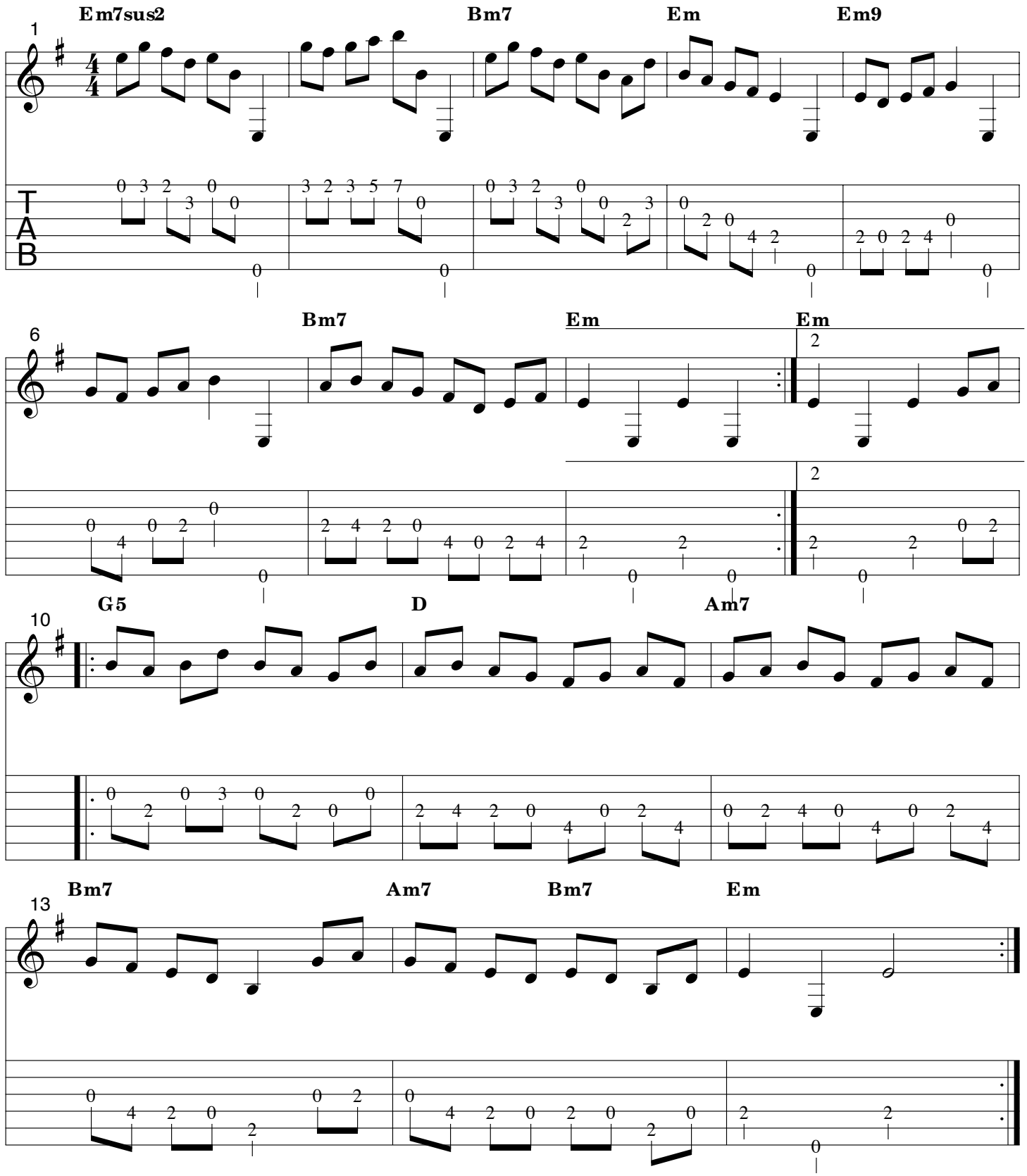
PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES

by Adam Granger

Of Contras and Capos

Hi there. I'm discussing two topics this time. One of my favorite gigs is playing contra dances. The reader needn't even know what a contra dance is to find value in this discussion. And if you think you've done everything that can be done with a capo, well, read on.

A little about contra dance

First, a definition: contra dance is an English-derived folk dance in which couples line up facing each other. Choreographed and pre-taught by a caller and usually danced to traditional fiddle music, the dancers weave through each other, working their ways down and up the line.

I play an average of two contras a month, almost always as a duo with fiddler Anni Spring. It is more common to have a four- or five-piece string band playing a contra dance, but there's not a lot of money to be made to start with at these events and, as a professional, I can't tie up my Saturday nights for less than a certain amount. In this situation, I am playing straight alternated-bass guitar (aka boom-chuck guitar or, if you're female, boom-chick guitar) and Anni is playing the melody.

Contra dances are based on 32-bar ("square") tunes; if a "crooked" tune is played, the music gets off from the dancers and mayhem ensues. One dance takes about ten minutes. A fiddle tune played at 120 beats a minute (the industry standard tempo for both contra and square dances) takes 30 seconds, so the band will typically play a tune (or a medley of tunes) 18-20 times for a single dance.

As I mentioned, a full band usually plays a contra dance, so Anni and I feel it especially encumbent upon ourselves to produce as full a sound as possible, She plays really hard, and incessantly, and I keep the beat and the backbeat mercilessly present throughout.

Within that constraint, however, reside a host of possibilities, and I mine all of them in the course of a three-hour dance. I'll play standard open chords with I-V bass notes, closed chords, themed bass lines, sock chords, variant chords and swing style (bass-less, with chords on both the beat and the backbeat). As long as the groove is maintained and you're not offending the sensibilities of the musician(s) with whom you're playing, anything goes at a contra dance.

In addition, it's common to syncopate in coordination with the dance moves, so that if there is a particular cadence, the rhythm section might parrot or enhance that. One of the most dramatic moves in contra dancing is the balance. This is such an important move that sometimes the caller will inform the band of its position in the dance (i.e., "There's a balance at the top of B2"). The band might then build up to that point and then leave a space at the moment of the balance and let the dancers stomp on the balance all on their own.

So where do capos come in?

The one-person rhythm section in a two-person band is always searching for more variety and depth in these ten-minute dances. In recent years, I've started doing something I've never seen anyone else do on the guitar, and that is to use three capos at once, shedding them from the top down as the dance progresses. Mind you, these are not partial capos, just normal ones. I use Shubbs because they are easy to remove in the middle of a tune, and they've been my number one capo choice anyway, since they came out in the mid-70s.

If we're playing a D tune, I'll put one capo on the seventh fret, one on the fifth and one on the sec-

READING *EASY-TAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in sync", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

ond. I'll start playing in a G position, pull the highest capo off after about five times through the tune, play in an A position using the fifth-fret capo, yank that off at about the halfway point, continue in a C position using the second-fret capo, whip it off and play in open (uncapoed) D for awhile, and then, for the last time or two or three, I'll quickly detune my low E string to a D note and end with that. (This is what I do on the *FGM* CD.) If we're playing a G tune, I'll follow the same procedure, but with one capo on the seventh fret playing in a C position, one on the fifth fret playing in a D position and one on the third fret playing in an E position, and ending up in open G. For A tunes, I'll capo on the seventh, fifth and second frets and play in the D, E and G positions, respectively, ending up in open A. For F tunes, which Anni plays lots of, I'll capo on the fifth, third and first frets and play in the C, D and E positions, respectively, ending up in open F. For C tunes, I'll capo on the eighth, fifth and third frets and play in E, G and A, respectively, ending up in open C (whereupon I will often tune my low E string two steps down to a C as a last note).

It took a while to learn to remove the capos without throwing them about or otherwise drawing attention to myself, but I've become pretty adept. (A qualifier here: my *FGM* CD demo of this technique sounds rather clumsy and frenetic, but remember that in this demo I'm singing the melody and describing my actions as I go, and condensing the procedure about fourfold.) There is a one-beat dropout during the process; I've found that if I perform this function at a random point toward the end of an iteration of the tune—say halfway through B2—and then keep playing the same bass notes I was playing in the upper position, I can then come in really strongly in the new position at the top of the next iteration of the tune.

In addition to adding lots of variety to the performance, there is a counterintuitive building of energy. Counterintuitive because the bass notes are getting lower and lower, and we tend to think of energy-building concepts as going up in pitch, not down. In a rhythm capacity, though, you are increasing your overall tonal range as you shed capos, and that amounts to a big, fat, long, ten-minute energy build.

This is admittedly a very specific situation, one that will be directly relevant to maybe two *FGM* readers. My reasons for dedicating an entire column to it are that I have never heard of anyone else doing this on the guitar and that I hope it will encourage other players to think creatively and in fresh ways about their relationship with their guitars and with music.

It's also given me an opportunity to talk a bit about contra dance accompaniment, to introduce it to those unaware of it and to encourage those who think of such accompaniment (as do some musical acquaintances of mine) as mind-numbingly boring to think again.

Music once again being an allegory for life, the situations we find ourselves in are what we make of them. Call me easy to please, but I am never bored playing backup guitar in whatever capacity arises.

A Personal History of Capos. . .

The first capo I used, in the early 60s, was a Bic pen and a rubber band (Bic pens were brand new in the US in those days, and were good because they had faceted barrels). I then graduated to the elastic Bill Russell capo, because they made a 12-string version and the aforementioned improvised capo wouldn't work on my Gibson B-25 12-string. For a while, I used the spring-loaded Hamilton capo, and then, when they came out in the early 70s, the Dunlop black canvas capo, which never seemed to have quite the right adjustment notch for my guitars. It's about that time that Charlie Sawtelle turned me on to the Shubb, which I've used ever since. I would use one of the fine "gated" capos made by my friend Phil Elliott but, this column notwithstanding, I don't use a capo often enough to warrant its living on the neck of my guitar. There are a lot of other capos, and I haven't tried them all, but for my needs, the Shubb is absolutely perfect. They never wear out, they're infinitely adjustable, they're low-profile and they won't put you in the poorhouse.

This is not meant to be an advertisement for Shubbs; we guitarists tend to be mighty loyal to our capo choices, and you may well love your Kyser, or your G7. That's why the guitar god gave us so many choices!

Adam Granger just returned from a Pacific Northwest tour with banjoist Alan Munde. Adam's wife went along, and a wonderful time was had by all. Adam and Alan played in Issiquah, Cashmere and North Bend, Washington and in Portland and Bend, Oregon, in addition to doing workshops at Dusty Strings in Seattle and in Portland. On their days off, Adam and his better half visited Newport, on the Oregon coast. Although Adam has played and taught in the Northwest twenty times, it was his first time seeing the actual coast. He thought it was mighty spiffy, and plans to not make it his last trip there.

Bill Bay Presents

Flatpicking Up-The-Neck

Key of A

It has been a while since we did "flatpicking on up-the-neck." I would like to resume that now with the key of A major. The piece, "Steep Levee," is written in A major and can be played in first position. In subsequent issues we will get into A major in both 4th and 9th position. This piece should be played with an up tempo, swing feeling. Happy picking!

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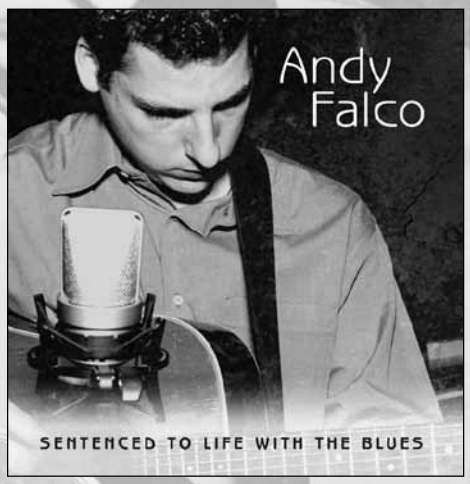

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A Scale

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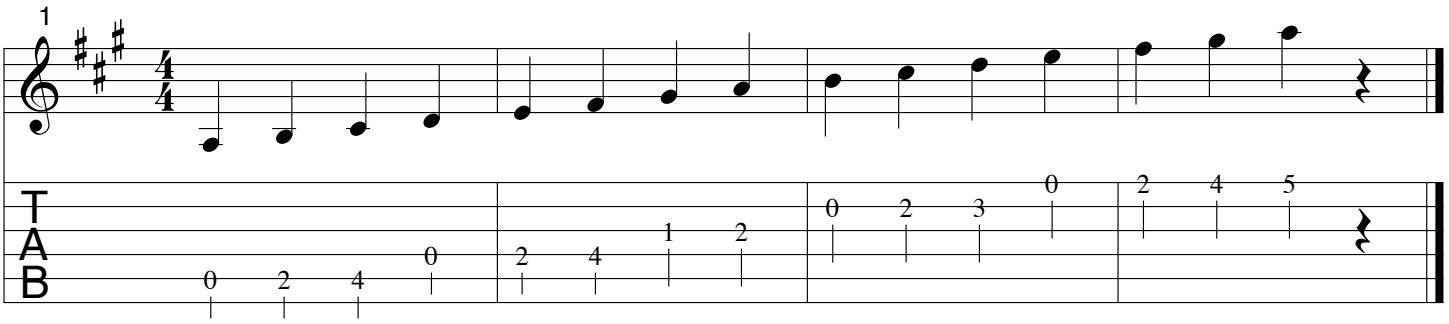

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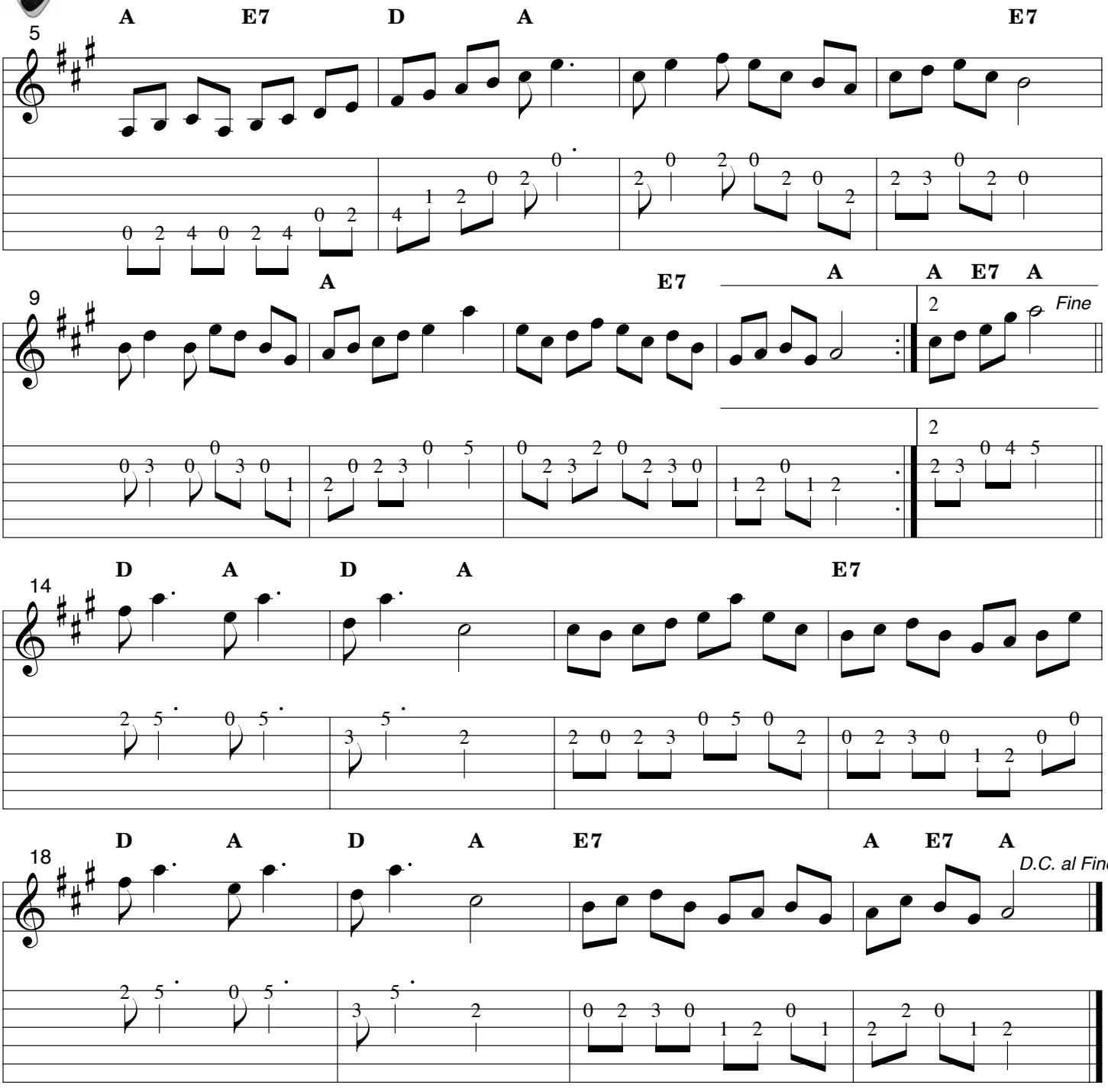
John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

Tango Derrane: Part 3

Here is the third section of "Tango Derrane" (at 1:13), from the recent duo album Grove Lane (Compass Records) I recorded with my friend, National Heritage Fellowship winner and Irish button accordionist extraordinaire Joe Derrane.

Joe provided me with a "lead sheet" which was three pages long. He notated the melody and wrote in suggest chord symbols, which I was free to interpret in my own way. Since Joe is a well rounded musician, he was able to conceive of the actual chord changes to go with the melody- not always the case among Irish musicians. We ran through the tune a few times, as the form was a bit long and unusual, and then "rolled tape". I was also the engineer on the recording, which means I leaned over and hit the record button on my laptop!

I can't claim much pre-planning in terms of what I would do, so in every way, the rhythm performance is an improvisation- much the way that bluegrass backing would be: you know the chords you are going to play (if not the specific voicings), but your right hand patterns will probably vary from verse to chorus, etc. I have written the basic voicings, rather than notating all the rhythms or bass lines, so you'll want to refer to the recording to get the details. It's all about the ear!

This section is based in E minor, with a descending line voiced on the A string that gives us Em7 to Em6 to a C7(9). On the C7 chord, you'll hear Joe's accordion playing some double stops that include the note F#- a very spicy sound on this chord that is called a "#11". It's a very common sound in the jazz world, but not often heard in this way within the flatpicking guitar world. You can add that note to the C7(9) voicing by barring your first finger across the second fret, and catching the F# on the high E string. We'd call this a C7(#11) chord, with the 9 being "inferred" by the #11 indication. You can try this as the 2nd chord of David Grisman's "EMD". Caliente!

The turnaround into the next section of the tune is in the last bar- Am7(9) to D7 (9, 13) with two easy to finger (but hard to pronounce) chords that use open strings for a unique color.

John McGann (www.johnmcgann.com) is a Professor at Berklee College of Music. His duo CD Grove Lane with Irish accordion legend Joe Derrane was voted #1 Irish Traditional Album of 2010 in The Irish Echo. His DVDs Rhythm Tune Up and Rhythm Mandolin and his books Sound Fundamentals and Developing Melodic Variations on Fiddle Tunes books are receiving great accolades. John's first solo album Upslide has been recently re-released and is available via Amazon.com and CDBaby.com as well as his own website. There are also two transcription folios available for Upslide, in guitar and mandolin editions, downloadable at http://download.johnmcgann.com/digStore.cfm. You can check out his custom transcription service, in which you can have any music of your choice notated, at johnmcgann.com. Drop by the web site for more bio info, and lots of great free technique tips for flatpickers.

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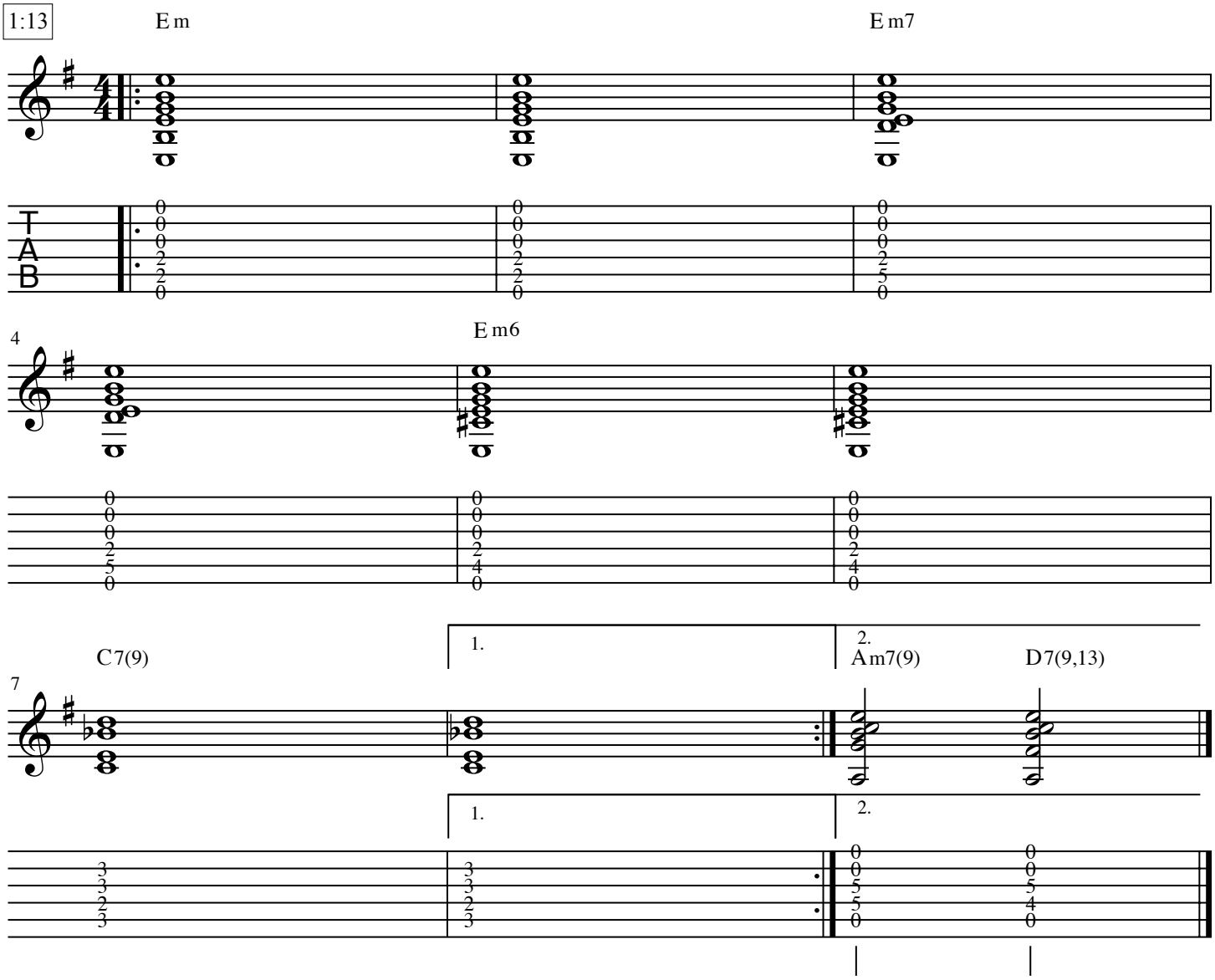
Tango Derrane

Arranged by John McGann



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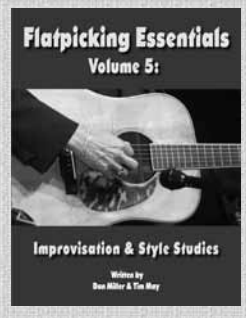

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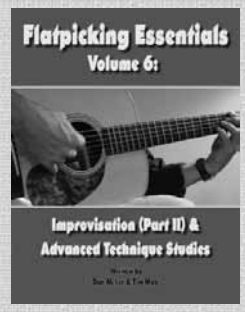


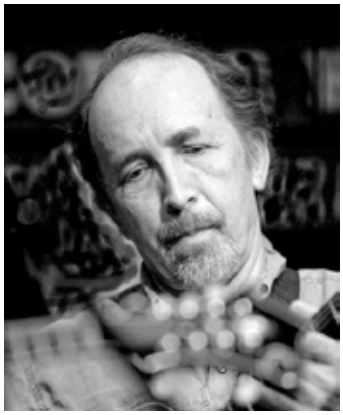
Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 6

Right Hand Workout

Music Theory

Bluegrass Guitar

by Steve Pottier



More Rest Strokes

Last time I was explaining the rest stroke technique and a few G (and D) runs. Here are a few more you should know about. They comprise some of the essential vocabulary of blugrass guitar playing.

First up is Jimmy Martin's G run at the end of the chorus of "Uncle Pen" (Ex 1). It's similar to one of the G runs from last time. All instruments stop as the trio sings:

Uncle Pen played the fiddle, Lord how it would ring
You could hear it talk you could hear it sing

Right after the word "sing" Jimmy plays the G run, then everyone starts up again. Start with a rest stroke on the open 5th string. After the first hammer, you can release the "rest" part of it so you can execute a quick upstroke on the open 4th string (right after the 2nd hammer). Then it's a pair of rest strokes to finish the run, a strum, then you're back in the tune.

Next is an abbreviated version of that run that Jimmy plays as J.D. Crowe plays "Theme Time" (Ex 2). The longer version is good when nothing else is happening (like the Uncle Pen run), but sometimes less is more, and this version works well in this banjo tune. Try sliding with your first finger from fret 1 to 2 on the 5th string, then either using the same finger on the 4th string. It's more like dragging it over to the 4th string than lifting it off and putting it back down.

Ex 3 is a signature Jimmy Martin lick. It is used in the II-V progression (A to D in the key of G). A good place to hear this is on his album *Big and Country Instrumentals* and for you Martin-heads out there, on the Bear Family box set. The chords for "Big Country" are:

G///C///	C///G///
G////D///	A///D///
G///C///	G///C///
G///D/G///	G///D/G///

Capo at the 2nd fret, in the key of A. The run in question can be heard behind the opening mandolin break during the bridge of the tune, where the chords go C-G-A-D. The D chord gets the treatment here. Use your second finger to get the 3rd fret "stutter" part, then the third and first fingers to get the notes on the 4th string. The rest strokes are played in pairs, 3-0 3-0. Lift your fretting finger as you play the open string to give a more clipped effect.

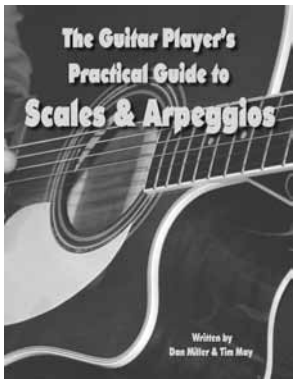
Ex 4 can be heard later on in the tune during the fiddle break, a bluesy variation. Jimmy continues the pattern into the G chord of the last section of the tune.

There are times when you can use a quieter version of the G run. On some slower gospel-type songs, you may want some punctuation without it sounding like "Uncle Pen." This last example (Ex 5) fills the bill. You can be playing very quietly to allow your four-part harmonies to shine through, then use this run to come up out of the background, fill the void, and then recede back down for the next vocal phrase. In this run, instead of a 2-beat hammer-on, there's a grace note hammer. To get a feel for it, play the run without the hammer, then using the same timing, play it with the hammer. The grace note (1st fret) and the following note can be thought of as one unit, played with a rest stroke. Follow with an upstroke on the open 4th string, then the familiar pair of notes played as down strokes in a single motion (one following the other without lifting the pick).

These licks are part of what I think of as essential blugrass guitar vocabulary, whether you play only rhythm or rhythm and lead. It's worth spending time on them, trying to get the details, listening for where they fit in, listening for the volume and tone. As simple as it seems, it is something I continue to work on, years after Phil Boroff first showed me a rest stroke.

The Guitar Player's Practical Guide to Scales & Arpeggios

by Tim May & Dan Miller

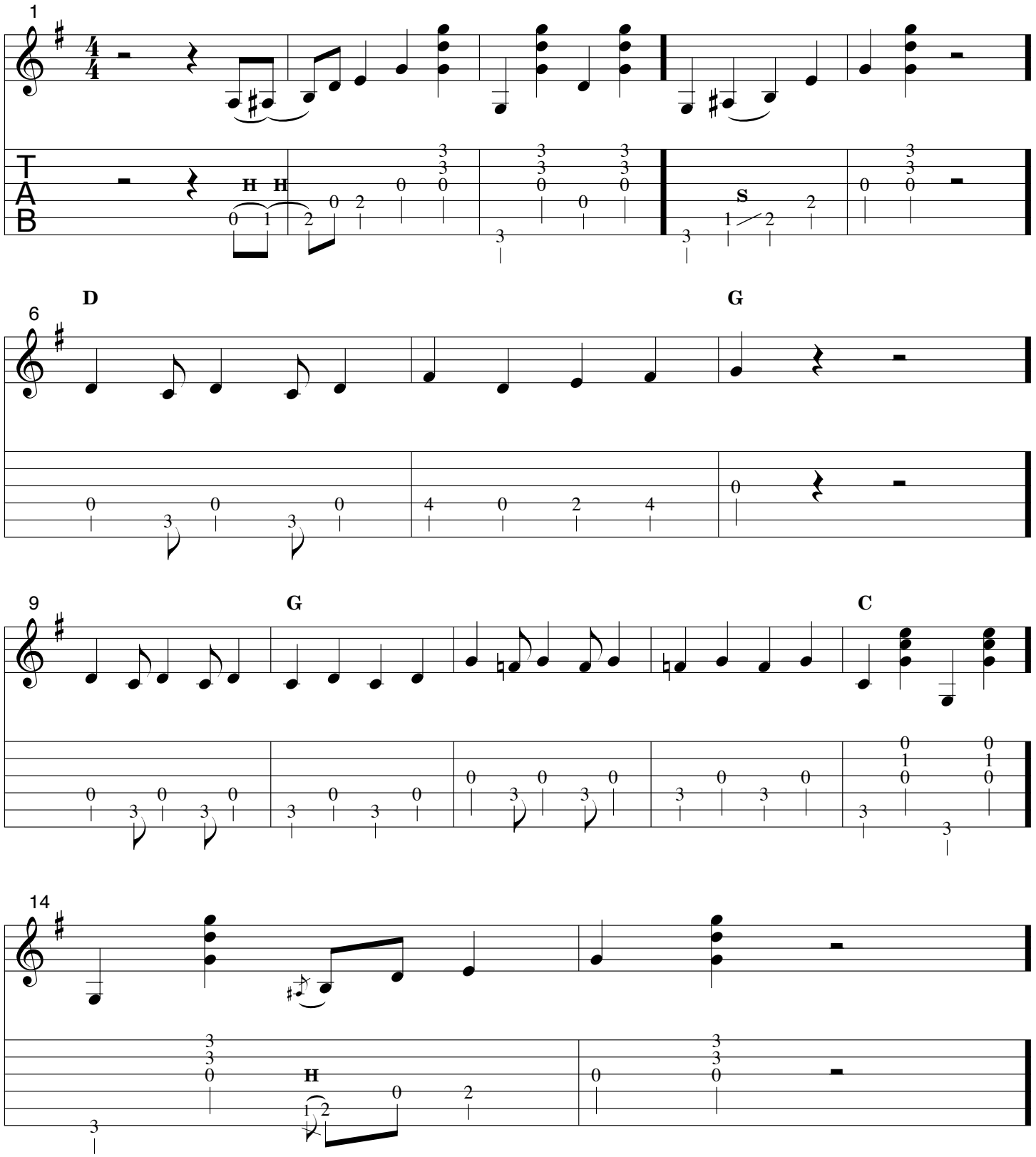


This new **160 page book (with 136 audio tracks on 2 CDs)** by Dan Miller and Tim May not only teaches you how to learn scales in a way that is easy, fun, interesting, and informative, it also shows you how to practically apply scales when learning new melodies, embellishing those melodies to create your own solos and variations, and in exploring improvisations.
The scale study method in this book uses six phrases as follows:
1) Scale pattern study and practice 2) Melody recognition practice 3) Improvisation practice
4) Scale mode practice 5) Scale interval practice 6) Ear training practice

The book is broken down into four sections ("The Big Four"): straight scales, folded scales (scale patterns), harmonized scales, and crosspicking arpeggios. By presenting scale and arpeggio knowledge in these six phases and four categories, the authors are able to clearly demonstrate how a knowledge of scales and arpeggios can be easily and practically employed.

Audio CD
Track 34

Rest Stroke Examples

Arranged by Steve Pottier

Not Just Another'n

by Dan Crary

Audio CD
Track 35

As I think back on the many lucky things in my life, one of them has been to get to meet and have conversations with some of the first-generation bluegrass musicians, the guys who invented the music in the 1950s. Certainly Bill Monroe was the Father of Bluegrass, but his offspring and their colleagues created the bluegrass world of the 50s. The bands of that era were populated by a bunch of amazing, talented, hard-headed, funny, sometimes outrageous musicians who made the music that (later) became the ground on which flatpicking itself flourished.

One of my favorite people of that generation was Red Allen; Red was man of many different textures, great singer, major rhythm guitar guy, and had probably the greatest one-liner repertoire in the history of humankind. When he wasn't having a serious conversation with you about something important, Red could tell about 7.3 jokes per minute, all one-liners, all that fit something that just happened, and often as not a bit outrageous and politically incorrect. When I was onstage with him I could barely play while convulsed in laughter. Once, when the applause for the previous tune wasn't quite what he thought it should be, he said "Now here's another'n you ain't gonna' like." It took me several minutes to recover…

I think about that line often today; 2011 has been the year our band (Dan Crary & Thunderation) got ourselves fully organized, Steve Spurgin and I found a permanent third member in mando/fiddle monster Martin Stevens (we kissed a few frogs before we found him), signed with a terrific new recording label (Blue Night Records), and made what I consider to be my best recording project ever (*Perfect Storm*, BNR 222). I can tell you that getting a band from zero to three hours of music worthy of a national audience is a lot of work, part of which is to think about how to present the material you play. It's a challenge to get up the material at all, then it's a whole new task to figure out how to put that material together for an audience, an avoid Red's irony about "another'n you ain't gonna like."

In fact, how you present what you can play to an audience is worthy of a *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* column. Perfectly good material, a good song, a solid performance, and skilled playing can fall flat if the music is presented a particular way. But presented another way, the same music can excite an audience and get you a return booking. But consider this reason: the better you present music to an audience, the more you yourself improve. I've ranted on this before, and here goes again: we are all teaching ourselves to play, you, me, and anybody else who is trying to become a better guitar player. It's a dark truth that a performance is also a practice session, where you either get better or worse, as in deeper in the old rut. One thing the old boys of the 50s had was a sense that they had to be not only skilled players, but also entertaining to an audience. So today, a couple of thoughts about how presenting flatpicking music to an audience can be both skilled and interesting, how thinking about and planning a presentation can make us better and also avoid "another'n you ain't gonna' like."

Today, consider one strategy of presentation, putting different pieces of music together as a suite, or to use a baser word, a "medley." Something about that word that doesn't quite get it, like a string of childrens' tunes, or something frivolous, but I'm suggesting something a little more serious. I first started thinking about this idea for a bluegrass band after a conversation with my English friend John Atkins, a major expert on Irish and American traditional music, including old time and bluegrass music. He pointed out that the Irish bands love to put several instrumentals together in a suite, with a rising dynamic that ends on a high, with the effect of the audience getting caught up in the dynamic. In addition, John pointed out how the Irish bands often pair a song with an instrumental to great effect.

So as examples, I will stick my neck out a little and refer you to a couple examples I tried myself. The examples are excerpted on the CD accompanying this issue. A couple of further considerations would be that the instrumental suite ordinarily needs to "build," so you need to select instrumental tunes that contrast, change key, change tempo, change dynamics in some way. With the song/instrumental combination, the pieces may be selected by theme or title, or some other rationale: you get to make one up. For our instrumental medley we started with a rubato version of "Shenandoah," followed by "Gold Rush," and ending with a mix of "Soldier's Joy" and "Bonaparte's Retreat." For "Long Journey Home," it seemed appropriate to mix it with "Reuben" to make a train-themed medley. But I paired "Sail Away Ladies" with "Sally Ann" just because I wanted to; the two just seemed to belong together. See what you think…

So thanks to our old friend Red Allen, God rest 'im, for warning us away from the nightmare of just "… another'n you ain't gonna like." And for those old boys who made our music and passed it along to us, let's remember to be grateful. Oh yes, and also worthy.

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CD Highlight
Nick DiSebastian & Kyle Tuttle

by Dan Miller

Several years ago I wrote an article for *Bluegrass Now Magazine* ("Brotherhood of Flatpickers," *Bluegrass Now*, June 2007) about all the young flatpickers who had moved to Nashville from various areas of the country to pursue their dreams of making it in the music business. It was a very interesting tread at the time because all of these young pickers—including players like Andy Falco, Tyler Grant, Chris Eldridge, Josh Williams, Dustin Benson, Justine Carbone, Tony Watt, and others—had become friends, spent a lot of time jamming together, and were supporting each other's careers by helping each other find gigs. Today, many of those players have since moved away from Nashville. They have scattered to different areas of the country—Falco to Virginia, Eldridge to New York, Watt to Boston, Grant to Colorado—and the trend is changing. Today it seems as though the talented younger players are more apt to end up in the Northeastern part of the country with the center of that universe being Boston.

Boston has always had a strong acoustic music scene. Many of the younger players who are currently in the Boston area are current or former students of the Berklee College of Music. Over the years Berklee has embraced acoustic music and bluegrass to an ever-increasing degree. When asked about this trend, FGM columnist and Berklee professor John McGann said, "Since 2004, when Roger Brown assumed his position as president of the college, we have had mandolin and banjo as principal instruments. Joe Walsh was our first mandolin student, and I couldn't have asked for a better one! We've had around 40 mandolinists through the program so far, including Sierra Hull, Jacob Jolliff, Dominick Leslie and Eric Robertson, to name a few who readers may know. That same year, I started my bluegrass guitar lab (and Django lab). Dave Hollender and August Waters had formed bluegrass ensembles in the past, but I think things really opened up a few years ago when we started what has become known as the American Roots Program, which embraces a wide variety of styles, including bluegrass.

Things are growing and changing at Berklee all the time, and the American Roots Program is filling a great demand for the many young students who want to deepen their knowledge and fluency in this great cornucopia of styles."

In July of 2011 I attended the Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival in upstate New York and found Berklee to be well-represented at that event. Courtney Hartman, a current Berklee student, was performing with Della Mae (we featured Courtney in the last issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*). The band Chasing Blue showcased on the Master's Stage. This band is made up of Berklee students (Mike Reese on guitar). Additionally, the chair of the string department at Berklee, Matt Glaser, was at Grey Fox to teach an improvisation workshop. Matt brought along Berklee graduate Joe Walsh (now playing mandolin with the Gibson Brothers and living in Portland, Maine), and Berklee student Nick DiSebastian to back him up at the workshop.

I had met Nick DiSebastian back in March of 2011 at the Wilmington Winter Bluegrass Festival in Wilmington, Delaware. We had a chance to jam a bit and talk about his life up in Boston and at Berklee. We talked again at Grey Fox in July, and then I saw him once again at the Ossipee Valley Festival in Hiram, Maine, where Nick competed in the flatpicking contest. A few months later Nick sent me an EP disc of original music that he and his picking partner, banjo player Kyle Tuttle, had recorded. Regarding the disc, John McGann said, "Nick and Kyle's fluid musical imaginations are matched by a wonderfully solid and authentic grounding in traditional American music. Two excellent players with outstandingly unique original compositions!" McGann continues, "Nick has been a favorite of mine since we met a few years ago at Berklee—he's been in my Django Ensemble and I've had him for private lessons. He's an easy going, hardworking, and talented musician who has been branching out into the multi-instrumentalist dimension lately as well."

Now twenty-two years old, Nick DiSebastian grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and started learning how to play the viola at age eight. By the time he was ten he was asking for a guitar for Christmas and his parents bought him an acoustic model. A year after that he got an electric guitar. He said, "I wanted to learn how to play some of my favorite songs, like "Back in Black," "Black Dog," and "Smoke on the Water." He learned those tunes and continued by studying more classic rock—Doobie Brothers, Led Zeppelin, The Allman Brothers.

Eventually, Nick's interest in classic rock and blues led him to find jam bands like the Grateful Dead and Phish and later to jazz artists like John Scofield. He said, "In high school I started to get interested in playing jazz and I played in both regional and state jazz bands." While still in high school, he took jazz guitar lessons from Mark Ryan, a guitar teacher from New York, who taught him how the fingerboard works, how music theory works, and how the guitar fits into different styles of music. He said, "I was about 14 or 15 when I started lessons with Mark and he really got me interested in playing jazz."

After graduating from high school Nick went to the University of Vermont to study music education and jazz guitar. After one semester in Vermont he transferred to West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and continued to study music education, but switched from jazz to classical guitar. By this time Nick had been exposed to the *Old and In The Way* recording as a result of his interest in the Grateful Dead. He had also heard *The Pizza Tapes* with Tony Rice and Bela

Fleck's *Bluegrass Sessions*. He said, "Those recordings started to get me listening to more bluegrass. That sound interested me."

His growing interest in bluegrass led him to attend DelFest during the summer after his first semester at West Chester. It was there that Nick "got bit" by the bluegrass bug. He said, "I went back to West Chester that fall, but I knew that I wanted to go to Berklee, so I started taking classes that would transfer. I bought a D-35 and started transcribing Tony Rice, Doc Watson, Russ Barenberg, Clarence White, and Norman Blake albums. I also started listening to Bryan Sutton."

In the fall of 2009 Nick enrolled at Berklee and earned his degree in Professional Music by the end of summer 2011. He said, "I took what is known as the 'Berklee buffet,' where you create your own curriculum. My focus was on music performance and business, but I also took some songwriting and production classes." Regarding the highlights of his time at Berklee, Nick said, "I enjoyed interacting with all of the young musicians at Berklee and being a part of the Boston music scene. Educationally, I enjoyed learning all different kinds of music—pop, rock, jazz, R & B, soul, bluegrass, old time. Studying with John McGann was huge. I also had the opportunity to study stage performance with Livingston Taylor. My time at Berklee also rounded out my knowledge of music theory and got my ear up to par. It also made me more aware of the business side of music. Being there at Berklee really puts everything into perspective for you because you are around some of the most awesome players in the business. It was a huge life-changing experience for me."

When asked about any challenges that he might have encountered when he moved from playing rock and jazz to playing bluegrass, Nick said, "John McGann really helped me tighten things up. He taught me about the role of the guitar in a bluegrass band and he really helped get my right hand in shape and improved my concept of tone and advance my knowledge of harmony. John's main focus as a teacher is rhythm, timing, and tone. He has a very positive attitude and so he is great to work with."

The CD that Nick and Kyle released (self-titled *Nick DiSebastian and Kyle Tuttle*) was recorded in Nick's bedroom during the summer of 2011. Nick said, "We wanted to document our songs and have something that we could sell at our gigs." The EP CD includes six tunes, three written by Kyle and three written by Nick. There are four instrumental tunes and two vocals. As a whole, the most impressive thing to me, given Nick's age, was his versatility and tastefulness. In each song he displays of a wide range of technique, a grasp of various styles, and a command of several genres.

Many young players shy away from silence. They like to fill up every moment with notes. On many of the tunes on this CD Nick demonstrates that he is not afraid to let a tune breath. Although he has influences and heroes on the guitar, there is no detectable "cloning" in his writing or soloing. That is also refreshing. Having

been influenced by everyone from Duane Allman, to Wes Montgomery, to Clarence White and Bryan Sutton, Nick has a lot of inspiration from which to draw. It is a CD full of great ideas. Nick's rhythm playing is also solid and full of great texture and variety. It is a very nice snapshot of Nick's talent at the beginning of what is sure to be a successful career.

During his last year at Berklee, Nick got a staff position playing in bands that back students in the vocal program. He currently still holds that job, working Monday through Wednesday. The other four days of the week he gigs, practices, writes, and teaches. Nick plans to keep his job at Berklee for a while as he continues to play gigs with Kyle Tuttle and with the band River Wheel. He said, "Eventually I'd like to find a committed band. I want to also continue to write songs and work on getting better at my secondary instruments." He states that his current bluegrass influences include Chris Eldridge, Bryan Sutton, Tony Rice, Clarence White, and Dan Tyminski.

Nick plays a Golden Era Martin D-18 (2005) and a Guild D-25 that has been modified by luthier and repairman Dan Lashbrook. He likes Blue Chip picks, Elixir Phosphor Bronze Nanoweb strings, Elliot capos, and Fender amps. The tune that Nick offered for our audio CD, and transcription, is an original tune from his new CD. This one is titled "Snowday."

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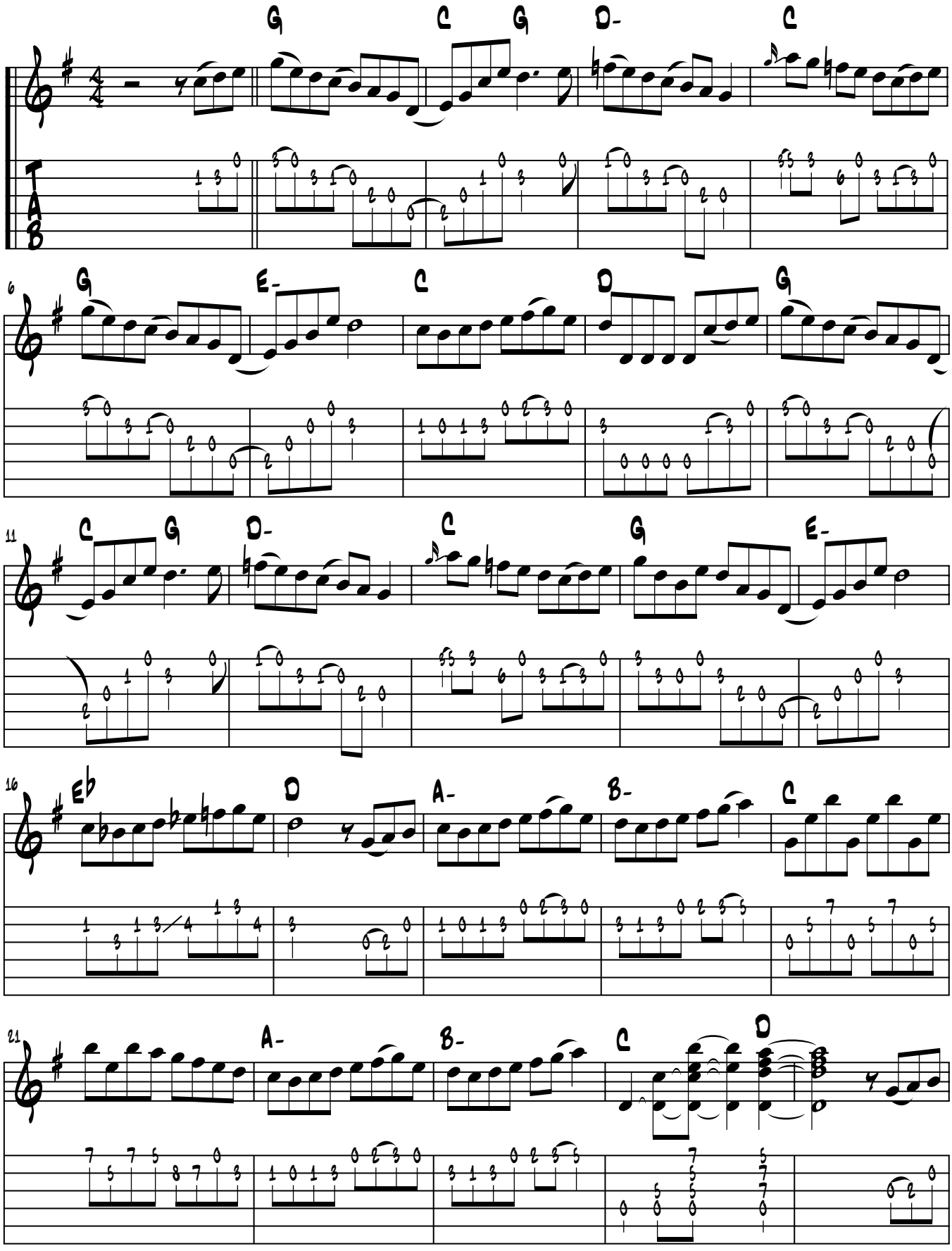
Audio CD
Track 36

Snowday

Written by Nick DiSebastian

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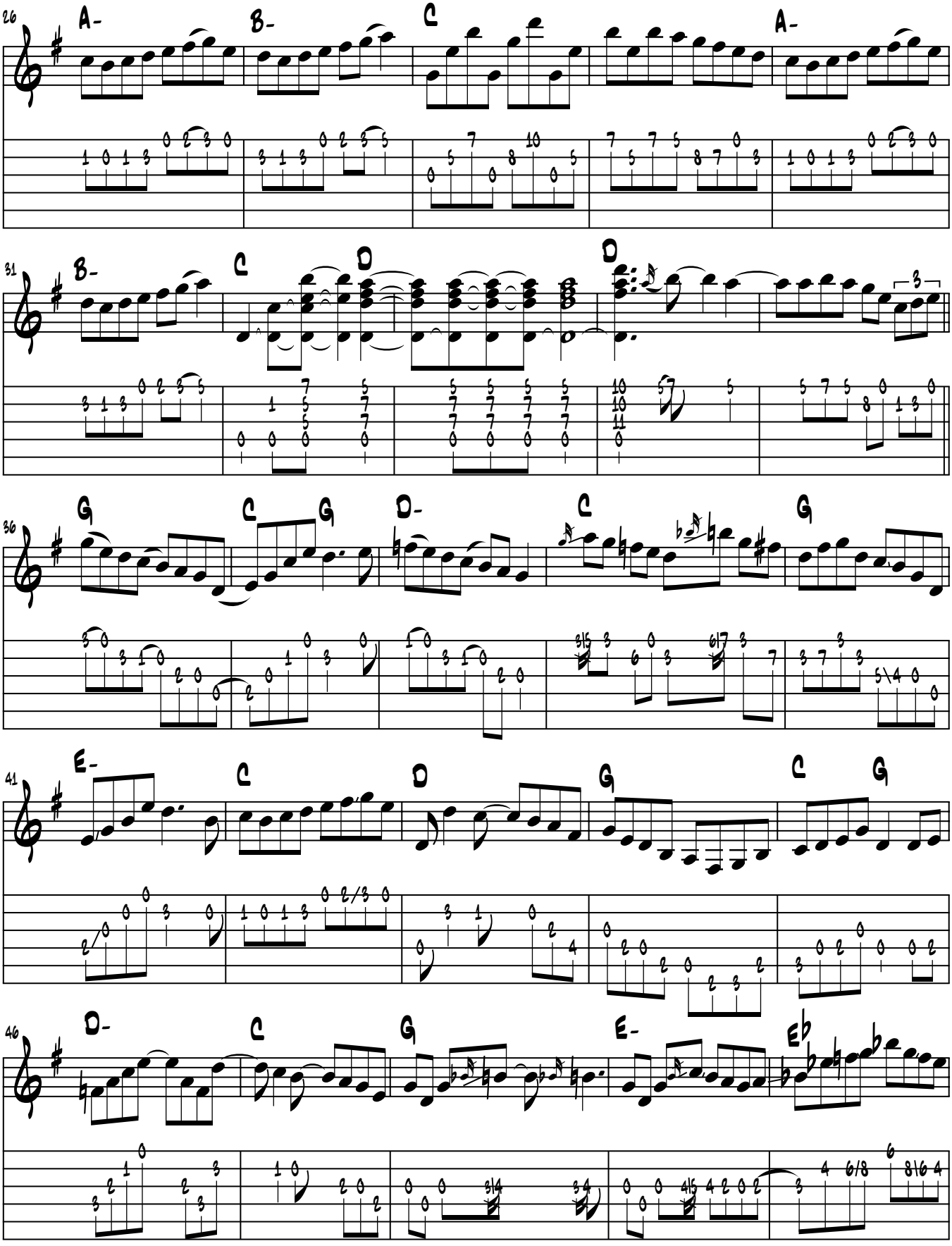
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The Nashville Numbering System, Part 2

by Dix Bruce

Last time we explored why the numbering system works the way it does and how it's based on the major scale. In this column will learn how to write numbering charts, often referred to as Nashville Numbering charts, and look at some of the variations different arrangers use.

In the last column we used the classic music theory approach to looking at chords in keys and assigned Roman numerals to them, upper case for major chords, lower case for minors. There is a wide range of number chart styles and while they all don't use Roman numerals, all use some kind of numbers, whether Roman or Arabic. It's not important which style you use as long as your style communicates what the different numbers mean.

Let's look again at the simple songs we worked with in the last column and put them into the form of a number chart. The first song is "Amazing Grace." The chords in the key of G are G, C, and D. That's all we need to know if we'll only play the song in the key of G. However, if we need to play the song in keys other than the key of G, a number chart can help us understand the relationships between these chords and help us move the chord progression to any key. Here's a listing of the chords in the key of G.

G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#dim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii

The G chord is the I, C is the IV, and D is the V. To make a number chart we need to have a few more pieces of additional information. We need to know how long each chord is held for. If you know the song well, you can count the number of beats and measures each chord receives. If not, you'll need some source, either a recording or a songbook that shows chord changes and measures. We also need to know the meter of the song. In this case "Amazing Grace" is in ¾ or waltz time so each measure will contain three beats. Here's a simple number chart for "Amazing Grace." The vertical lines represent measure lines.

¾ | I | I | IV | I |
I	I	V	V
I	I	IV	I
I	V	I	I

Notice that there are four measures in each line. Doing that makes the chart easier to read and more predictable than mixing uneven numbers of measures on subsequent lines. It's not a hard and fast rule, just a general one. There may be times when you just can't fit the same number of measures on every line.

What does this chart tell us? The first line tells us to play two measures or six beats of the I chord followed by one measure or three beats of the IV chord and one measure of the I chord. Line two tells us to play two measures or six beats of the I chord followed by two measures or six beats of the V chord. I'll let you figure out the following two lines. What will the actual I, IV, and V chords be in the key of G? How about in the key of C? Here's a diagram of the key of C chords. Swap in the correct chords.

C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii

If you haven't done so already, download the Scale and Chord chart I posted on my website (http://musixnow.com/downloads.html and click the link for Scale and Chord Chart). It shows all the major scales and the numbered chords of all the keys you're likely to encounter. Practice transposing "Amazing Grace" to as many keys as you can: D, E, A, F, Bb, etc.

As I mentioned, Nashville Charts often use Arabic numerals instead of Roman numerals. The meaning is the same. Here's another version of the "Amazing Grace" chart.

¾ | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
1	1	5	5
1	1	4	1
1	5	1	1

Often, when two or more consecutive measures have the same chord, a kind of musical shorthand is used. The first chord is named but a repeat sign is used in subsequent measures. The repeat sign, which means to repeat the previous measure, looks like a diagonal slash with dots above and below. Something like this: 𝄎

Here's how it would look in the context of the "Amazing Grace" chart.

¾ | 1 | 𝄎 | 4 | 1 |
1	𝄎	5	5
1	𝄎	4	1
1	5	1	𝄎

Last time we looked briefly at "Fair and Tender Ladies." Let's take it up again and make a Nashville Number chart, this time in the key of D. "Fair and Tender Ladies" is from my *Parking Lot Picker's Songbook* and I'm using that version as the basis for the chart. Making a number chart is fairly simple when you have a written version of the song to work from. It's posted on my website so you can follow along (go to http://musixnow.com/downloads.html and click the link "Fair and Tender Ladies").

We've already established that the song is in the key of D. The sheet music also tells me that it's in 4/4 so there will be four beats in every measure. I won't add that to the number chart but I could. It depends on how familiar your audience would be with the song or the style of your chart. I tend to not write in a time signature when the song is in 4/4 since more songs seem to be in 4/4 than ¾. Also, ¾ songs often have "waltz" in the title. That's a dead giveaway. Here's a diagram of the chords in the key of D.

D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#dim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii

From the sheet music we can see that the first six measures of "Fair and Tender Ladies" use a D chord. From the diagram above we see that in the key of D the I chord is a D. Following that are two measures of A7, the V chord. Since the original chord form the sheet music is a seventh or

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dominant chord, our number chart should reflect that. And, since we're using Arabic numerals instead of Roman numerals in this chart we'll label this chord a 57. After the A7 we have two measures of Em, the ii chord. We'll call that 2m in the chart just to make sure readers know we want a two minor chord. Following that are two measures of D, one of Em, one of A7, and two more of D, or I, ii, V7, and I. Here's the full chart with repeat marks.

1	𝄎	𝄎	𝄎	𝄎	𝄎
57	𝄎	2m	𝄎	1	𝄎
2m	57	1	𝄎

This chart has six measures per line, not four as in the previous chart. I could have laid it out with four but six looked right to me in this case.

Let's look at one more song, another from the last column, "Salty Dog Blues." Here's a lyric sheet with the chords written on it.

G E7
"Standing on the corner with the lowdown blues,
A7
Great big hole in the bottom of my shoes,
D7 G
Honey, let me be your salty dog."

If you know the song, it'll be easy to make a number chart. If you're not familiar with it, you'll need the sheet music or a recording to work from. I referred to key of G chord diagram above to find the given chords and assign numbers to them. Since the E7, A7, and D7 are all seventh or dominant chords, I'll want to reflect that in the number charts. Here are a couple different number charts made from the lyric/chord sheet above. The first uses Arabic numerals, the second Roman.

Chart #1

| 1 | 67 | 27 | 𝄎 |
| 57 | 𝄎 | 1 | 𝄎 |

Chart #2

| I | VI7 | II7 | 𝄎 |
| V7 | 𝄎 | I | 𝄎 |

Try transposing these charts to as many keys as you can. If you get stuck, consult the Scale and Chord chart you downloaded. If you practice transposing enough, you'll begin to build a working knowledge of the numbering system and be able to plug in the correct chords from any key. When you master that, you'll have a deep understanding of how music works and the relationships between keys, scales, and chords. Life will be even grander than it already is!

Of course there are many more variations and styles of number charts. More elaborate symbols can define rather intricate arrangements — sometimes called "roadmaps" — with rests, parts, stops, starts, modulations, repeats, multiple endings, codas and more. Symbols are often borrowed from standard music notation. It's a great system to know. If you'd like to learn more about the Nashville Numbering System and see additional examples of number charts, check out my book *Guide to the Capo, Transposing, and the Nashville Numbering System.*

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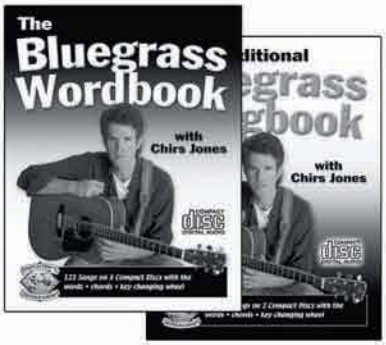

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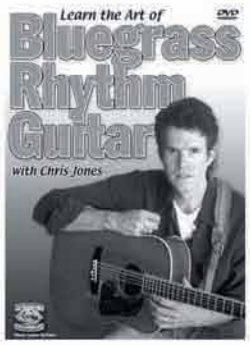

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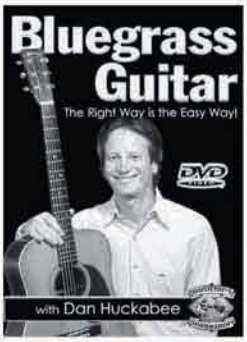

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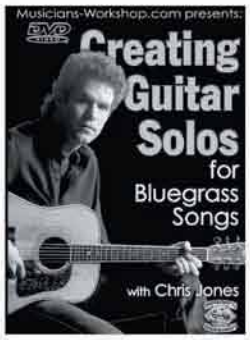

Chris takes you beyond "lick-oriented soloing by showing you how to mold a simple Bluegrass melody into a fancy, tasteful, driving guitar solo, a solo that is faithful to the melody, while being "hot" at the same time. Songs include: Shady Grove, Pig in a Pen, In the Pines, Bury Me Beneath the Willow, Bridge to Portsmouth.
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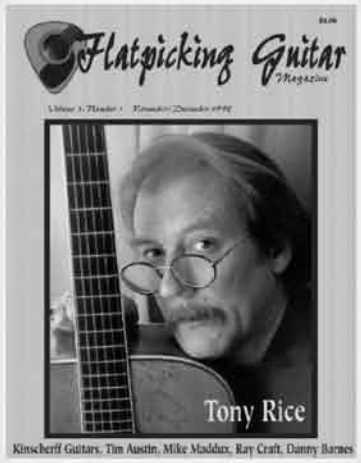

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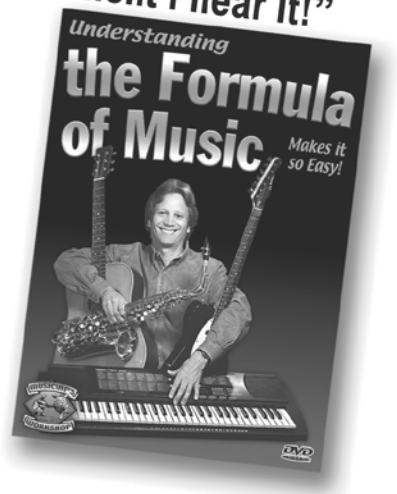

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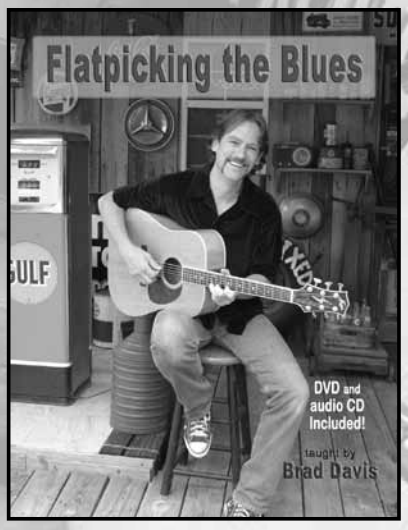

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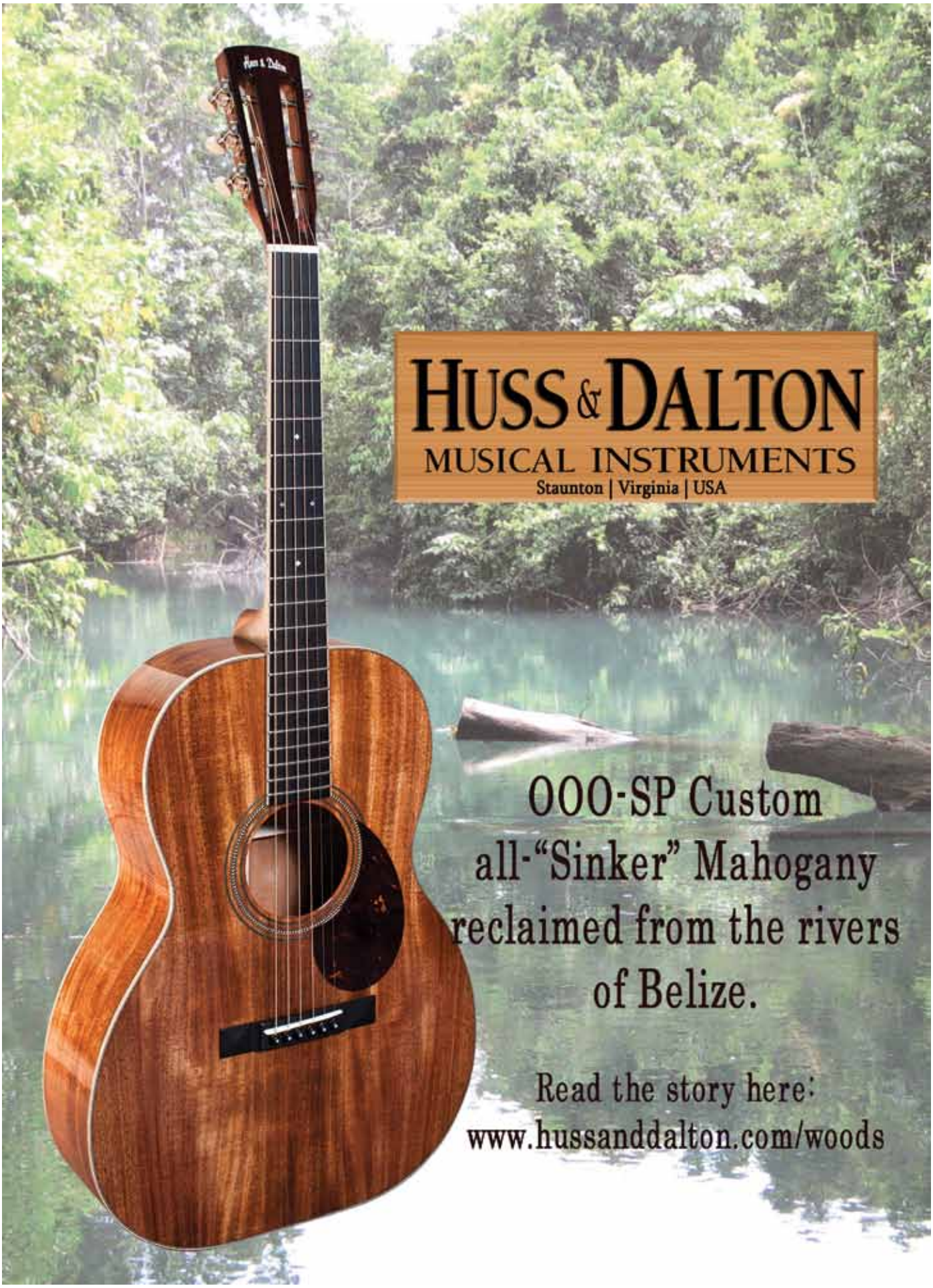
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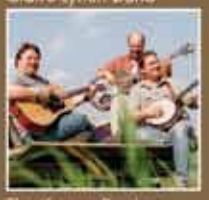
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